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ABSTRACT

Empirical studies have shown that teachers treat students differently in response to differences in manner of speaking and in response to other features of style which may be culturally determined, and that Black children are frequently the subject of this treatment, which is often negative and critical. This study examined these interactions from the standpoint of students. Freshman counselors selected articulate students in the middle achievement range who were open to participation in research. Ten girls and eight boys from three different feeder junior high schools were interviewed concerning discrimination in their junior high schools. Nine subjects were Black, seven were White, one was Hispanic, and one was Asian. Students discussed race relations among students and between students and teachers. Audio tapes and transcripts of the conversations were analyzed for instances of racially discriminatory behavior in teachers. Most students reported instances of racially discriminatory behavior, although in many cases, students did not refer to them as such, and most conceded that racial prejudice was present in their schools. No significant differences were found with respect to race or sex of student or of teacher, family political history, or school attended. (NB)

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REPORTS OF HIGH SCHOOL FRESHMEN ON THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF RACIAL PREJUDICE DURING JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

by

Charles E. Cole

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REPORTS OF HIGH SCHOOL FRESHMEN ON THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF RACIAL PREJUDICE DURING JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Charles E. Cole

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Abstract

Empirical studies show that teachers treat students differently in response to differences in manner of speaking and in response to other features of style which may be culturally determined, and that black children are frequently the subject of this treatment, which is frequently negative and critical. However, in spite of such evidence, almost no research exists which examines these interactions from the standpoint of, or through the eyes of students. This study tries to do that.

Freshman counselors were asked to select students for the study who were in the middle achievement range, and who showed evidence of being articulate and open to participation in research. Ten girls and eight boys from three different feeder junior high schools were interviewed in an attempt to discover if they were aware of any such discrimination in their junior high schools. Of the eighteen, nine were black, seven were white, one was Hispanic and one was Asian. Each interview lasted from 30-50 minutes, and ranged over a wide, loosely guided series of topics. Students were asked to discuss race relations, among students and between students and teachers. Audio tapes and transcripts of the conversations were analyzed for instances, overt or subtle, explicit or implicit, of racially discriminatory behavior in teachers.

Most students reported instances of racially discriminatory behavior, although in many cases, students did not refer to them as such, and most conceded that racial prejudice was present in their schools. No significant differences were found with respect to race or sex of student or of the teacher, family political history, or school attended.

Implications for social policy are suggested with particular reference to housing and employment practices. Suggestions for school systems are also made. Grouping practices, ability assessment, and curriculum organization are questioned, as are teacher expectations and student-teacher interactions. Recommendations are made in regard to in-service retraining of teachers who deal with students of different cultural backgrounds, curriculum revision and extracurricular activities.

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At the center of this are the kids who were more kind, fair, honest and courteous to this stranger than could possibly have been expected. Clearly, what I think I know about this topic is based largely on their frank discussions of their lives. I thank Arden, Toni, Terry, Kathy, Catron, Frank, Sharon, Bonnie, Mary, Donald, Rudolfo, Nello, Sarah, Beth, Iris, Larry, Kevin, and Holly (all pseudonyms, as are all school and city names). I am also indebted to the three principals of the local junior high schools, who spoke candidly about their schools, and who let me, an employee in the same schooldistrict, in on their ways - something that is quite rare in our subtly competitive business.

Tom Kochman started me thinking about some of the central issues of this problem many years ago. He also found time to discuss this with me when I was just getting it off the ground, and his writings continue to enlighten me.

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I also derived much needed support, encouragement, and help from the strangely unconnected and strangely connected cohort known simply as The People In The Doctoral Program. It is amazing how important such an ethereal entity can be.

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I dedicate this project to the memory of my parents who taught me at an early age the importance of tolerance and the problems with prejudice. It was dedication to their ideals that got me through some of the rough spots, in more ways than one. If it is unpopular in some quarters even now to argue for equal opportunity for blacks, it was much harder in the 1940's and 1950's to do so. That they were so highly principled makes me proud.

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"...there is not a reason to be prejudiced,
but a reason why they are prejudiced"

Chapter I: Introduction

Background

The problem of race in America is almost as old as America itself. From the first boatloads of unwilling captive Africans to current sociological tracts detailing unequal opportunity of participation for blacks and whites in American society, ample evidence exists that America is not, and has not been a happy melting pot of ethnic groups. While the form of this "peculiar institution" has changed, the fact remains that blacks and whites in America occupy vastly different roles with regard to access to power, authority, opportunity and status. At the same time, the changes that have occurred, if not totally adequate, have done much to move blacks in America from being goods and chattel, closer to a position of parity and legitimacy in partnership in social, political and economic decisions and participation. At least black people can vote, hold office, apply for high level executive positions, purchase baseball teams, and the like. By many measuring sticks, life in America is light years ahead of where it was in 1750, to say nothing of 1950, and quite a bit past the totalitarian regimes in other parts of the world today. Indeed, legislation of the past 30 years has formally broken numerous barriers. It has enfranchised and empowered our nations's largest minority, and provided, at least formally and officially, close to equal status with the majority.

But all is not right. Indeed, by many other measuring sticks, huge gaps exist between guarantee and delivery - between promise and reality. Many gauges of success indicate a wide disparity, including such yardsticks as income levels, formal education received, job security figures, housing patterns, and crime statistics. These and many other standards betray a miserably disproportionate distribution of goods, opportunities, and services.

Such gaps cry out for attention. Two responses to this cry typify the attitudes held by most people in the majority: a) It's "their" fault. They are satisfied with their lot, and if they're not, they should change themselves; and b) It can't be their fault, since they don't really have any power. Of course, no situation as deeply complex as this has simple answers. Indeed, the questions are not even clear. It would be the tendency of this researcher, however, to side with the point of view that significant change requires access to power. Any progress that is to be made in this arena will require close examination of the relationships between the members, and will demand close scrutiny of the types of interpersonal interactions which form the foundation for society's commerce. It seems incumbent upon those with power and authority, however, to make the first and most moves. And while it is seldom that dictators call for democracy, the onus for redress for the situation falls mainly on those who stand to benefit most from the status quo, and they must be the ones to carve some inroads into this condition, even if it means relinquishing certain goods, services and opportunities for themselves. To begin this process, a lot of self-examination is called for. One place to examine the nature of interracial relationships is in our public schools. This effort is at the bottom of this study.

The Problem

There are many reasons to believe that there are teachers whose attitudes and behaviors betray their harboring of racial prejudices. Students occasionally comment to that effect. Parents occasionally raise such suspicions. Teachers are overheard to make negative, derogatory comments of a racial nature. Research seems to indicate it. And, America as a whole has not yet come to terms with all the ramifications of a culturally pluralistic society. In its numerous forms, racial prejudice is, unfortunately, still a fact of life. What is not so easy to know, however, is the effect and impact that racial prejudice has on students, or to what extent they are even aware of it.

One way of investigating the nature of the student-teacher relationship for the presence of prejudice is simply by looking at it, and many researchers have done so, directly and indirectly. Records of differential treatment of students along racial lines are fairly easy to find. In Kochman's (1989) study, for instance, it was found that high school guidance counsellors gave more help to students who were of the same ethnic group. In another study, the number of black students suspended from schools at all levels was three times the number of white students (Wu, 1982). And in several studies that entail direct observations of classrooms, teachers frequently were found to exhibit different, discriminatory behaviors toward students, based upon race (Becker, 1952; Emihovich, 1982; Hillman, 1978; Trujillo, 1986). As compelling as this may be, one major component is still missing from the picture - reports from the students, themselves, on the nature of the interactions between them and their teachers. There is, it seems, a real dearth of information from this perspective. Research into student perceptions of teacher behavior and attitude is quite rare. It is the intention of this study to mine this untapped quarry of information. Working from the assumption, arrived at through observation and through review of the research, that some teachers do, in fact, exhibit teaching behaviors that appear to be grounded in racial prejudice, the question still remains: to what extent are students aware of this racial prejudice?

The question of whether a person is or is not racially prejudiced is, of course, extremely difficult to answer. Numerous researchers have designed instruments that ostensibly ascertain the degree of prejudice held by a subject. As early as 1928, Bogardus designed the Social Distance Scale to measure the level of prejudice against various immigrant groups. Since then, many others have attempted to measure this phenomenon. Indeed, Clark (1963) sees it as more than a mere quirk; he considers it a personality disorder, and indicative of a disturbed society.

Prejudice, itself, has many dimensions. Farley (1982) calls prejudice "attitudinal racism," and identifies its three main dimensions: what people believe to be true (cognitive), what they like or dislike (affective), and how they are inclined to act (conative). VanLear (1981) suggests three similar dimensions: cognitive (stereotyping), affective (feelings), and communicative social distance. At the same time, one purpose of this study is to derive the students' constructed meaning of the term, prejudice, as expressed in their interviews. The various experts' definitions of the term are derived from countless studies, wide-ranging research, and extensive observations of human nature. Yet, as universal and all-encompassing as these definitions attempt to be, it is unlikely they can reflect the most current evolution in the meaning of the term as it is constructed by today's students. Therefore, these definitions will serve as standards with which the students' reports can be compared, examined, and contrasted.

The field of sociolinguistics may also provide some important insight into the nature of the student-teacher interaction. A wealth of this research sheds light on cross-cultural relations. Some researchers believe, as does Farley (1982), that "when two ethnic groups speak different languages [for example, Standard English and Black English], the potential for conflict between them increases." Luke (1986) has examined how teachers misconstrue verbal as well as non-verbal communication of children of different cultural backgrounds. It is the basic tenet of several writers (Gumperz & Tannen, 1979; Kochman, 1984, 1986a, 1986b, 1989; Cecil, 1985) that one's social and cultural experiences mediate the interpretation of others' verbal and non-verbal cues, leading to misunderstandings and, ultimately, to judgements, not only about a person's use of language, but about his/her ability or intentions or character.

Studies such as this one which are designed to examine the extent to which instances of ethnic discrimination are evident in society's institutions are relatively rare today. They proliferated after WW II, focusing predominantly on anti-Semitism. Then, in the late 1960's, the push to desegregate the schools, and the concomitant racial unrest in the major cities, provoked a spate of new studies on integration, desegregation, and race relations. But, by 1975, those social and academic imperatives had apparently abated, as the research was reduced to a trickle (Rist, 1979; Weinberg, 1981). In one of the few studies of student perceptions, Weinstein and Middlestadt (1979) suggest that a key to understanding teacher treatment is in mapping the terrain through the eyes of the students" (p. 422).

Current research into this specific line of inquiry is extremely difficult to find. The goal of this study, therefore, is to initiate investigation into this neglected area of inquiry by examining this aspect of junior high school life through the eyes of the students.

Several questions are being asked in this study. However, there is one central question that is the focus:

- To what extent are students aware of racial prejudice in their teachers?

Other questions which the study attempted to address are:

- What is the students' evidence for claims of prejudice?
- What are the overriding effects of racial prejudice?
- Did anyone feel, or were they aware that they were the indirect or inadvertent beneficiary of racial discrimination which was directed at someone else?

Chapter II: Review of the Literature

The five domains

In order to gain sufficient understanding of the ramifications of the questions asked in this study, it is necessary to construct a conceptual framework. This framework should serve to define and delimit the questions, and provide a position from which to view the various factors connected with the issue. The subject is one with many significant aspects. Most likely, there exists no one best way to carve it up in order to analyze it. Theoretical bases from all divisions of various social sciences - political, sociological, psychological, anthropological - have something to provide, and can furnish much to help establish some unified perspective. For the purpose of setting the conceptual stage for this study, I will provide a review of pertinent literature from five fields of research. While the relationships of these five domains to this study are fairly clear, I will attempt, in Chapter V, to draw them together into a coherent theory with which to interpret the data from the study.

One body of research might be called, for want of a better term, prejudice and stereotype literature. It is concerned with the formation and acquisition of prejudices, the dynamics of prejudice, and frequently, although not germane to this stage of this research, reduction of prejudice and racial tensions.

A second field concerns itself with teacher/student expectations/treatment. The literature from this field, derived from the broader area of educational research, examines various ways in which beliefs teachers hold about students are translated into differential treatment of those students, and the correlation of this treatment with student achievement.

A closely connected area of relevant research is sociolinguistics. This field examines linguistic behavior and interprets and analyzes the ways it is determined by social and cultural factors. As such, it can shed light on verbal and even non-verbal communications which occur among people of different social and/or cultural milieus.

A fourth body of research is concerned with social structure. This research addresses the large scale issues of socio-economic class in society, and the relationships among and between classes. In as much as school is an institution within society, and participants in schooling are also members of larger society, and are subject to its influences and prerogatives, social class structure, particularly with reference to race, has significance in this study.

A fifth sphere of relevant research is comprised of examination of the development of adolescents. The primary data sources in this study are interviews with 15 year-olds. Any interpretations of their reports, and any conclusions drawn from them must by viewed with an awareness of what is known about the stage of human growth known as adolescence. I will attempt to show that these five realms can, from their different directions, illuminate the central features of this study.

Prejudice

No doubt, man's inhumanity to man has long been a widely recognized flaw in the species. In a book of essays commissioned by Harvard University, Nesbit (1982) quotes British statesman Edmund Burke, in an eloquent statement from 1790 on the nature of the peculiar type of inhumanity we call prejudice:

> Many of our men of speculation, instead of exploding general prejudices, employ their sagacity to discover the latent wisdom which prevails in them. If they find what they seek, and they seldom fail, they think it more wise to continue the prejudice, with the reason involved, than to cast away the coat of prejudice and to leave nothing but the naked reason, because prejudice, with its reason, has a motive to give action to that reason, and an affection which will give it permanence. Prejudice is of ready application in the emergency; it previously engages the mind in a steady course of wisdom and virtue, and does not leave the man hesitating in the moment of decision, skeptical, puzzled and unresolved.

This statement contains some of the same insights and understandings of prejudice that current thinking does. Many years later, psychologists and sociologists investigating prejudice wind up saying the same things. Prejudice seems to serve a purpose in people - it permits us to view the world the way we need and choose to.

One such early and important study was begun in 1943 when T. Adorno and his associates were asked to undertake a study of anti-Semitism. Their resulting study, The Authoritarian Personality (1950) was a landmark in the study of prejudice. In essence, they had asked if it was possible that there was a certain personality type associated with prejudice, and if so, how was such a personality acquired? Their answer, arrived at through careful and exhaustive research was that there is, indeed, such a thing as a prejudiced personality type - the authoritarian personality, brought about partly as a result of overly strict childrearing. Prior to this time, many people thought that racial and religious prejudices were inborn (Clark, 1963). The authoritarian personality is comprised of a number of common traits: strict adherence to customs and conventions, a tendency to view things as right/wrong, good/bad, a strong need for structure and order, devotion to institutions, and traditionalism. Adorno's findings became the foundation of a widely accepted theory of prejudice that holds that prejudices reflect personality structure and serve certain personality needs, as is implied in Burke's statement. For example, Rokeach's study, Characteristics of a closed mind (1960), found numerous personality features common to people he characterized as "close minded." Some of these appear to be related to those traits Adorno had identified. Such theory also posits that protection of a delicate ego is partially accomplished by the formation of in-groups, membership in which supports the feeling of specialness. Adorno generally referred to prejudice as ethnocentrism, although such in-groups are not always related to ethnicity. Simpson and Yinger (1985), for instance, propose that prejudice may simply be a general misanthropy. "There may be no other in-group other than the self" (p. 80). Moffett (1989) used the term agnosis to refer to the almost intentional shutting out of knowledge which might spoil one's identity, especially when that identity is based on notions of superiority of one's ethnic or language in-group. Moffett also claims that some deeper psychological reasons underlie this trait, namely that it indicates the rejection of self-examination. Instead, one crusades against evils one unconsciously wants to eradicate from oneself. Adorno's theory has been substantially modified over the years as other investigators have examined additional variables, yet it retains its essential feature - the proposition that the harboring of prejudices is a way to maintain self-esteem in certain personalities. That prejudice is the expression of a somehow deficient personality structure is also claimed by Clark (1963) when he says simply that "prejudiced people are dominated by primitive fears and hatreds" (p. 24).

Generally, prejudice is viewed by researchers as an emotional, rigid attitude. In the view of Simpson and Yinger, inherent in this attitude is a predisposition to behave in a certain way toward a group of people, or members of that group. Of course, the "group" itself may only be a group in the mind of the beholder. At the same time, the attitude involves not only prejudgment as indicated by the word, prejudice, but also misjudgment - and a misjudgment that one defends. That is, one might misjudge the speed of an oncoming car, but it is unlikely that one would stubbornly hold onto this (mis)judgement. It is more likely that one would try to correct the error. But, in the case of a prejudice, there is an element of, "My mind is made up, don't confront me with the facts."

Farley (1982) also sees prejudice as a tendency to think in a particular way, usually negative, toward an entire group. He would divide this thinking into three types. Those thoughts that indicate beliefs and ideas about groups of people would be considered the cognitive aspect of prejudice. The deeply held feelings and the emotional thinking is the affective aspect of prejudice. He calls the desire to act negatively the conative aspect of prejudice.

Roberts (1975) uses a term that seems to have replaced the word prejudice in some people's vocabularies - racism - and uses it to refer specifically to the act of assigning people inferior or limited roles, based on race, color, or ethnic group, with the assumption that these characteristics somehow predict character, capability, or behavior. And a United Nations publication (1949) also tends to focus on the active expression of feelings, as it describes prejudice as "...conduct based on a distinction made on grounds of natural or social categories, which have no relation either to individual capacities or merits..."(p. 4).

One of the seminal figures in the study of prejudice, Gordon Allport (1954) called prejudice an antipathy based on faulty and inflexible generalizations. He said that prejudices could be felt or expressed, and identified five levels of expression, from antilocution, that is, talking badly about someone, to the extermination of an entire group. What this implies is that prejudice, that is, thoughts and feelings, and discrimination do not necessarily accompany each other. Indeed, it is possible to harbor prejudices and not act on them, and conversely, it is possible to discriminate and not actually have prejudiced beliefs. Social pressures, for instance, can compel a person to act in a discriminatory manner, even if that person does not harbor any prejudices. For example, a white store owner may not hire a black salesperson because he fears customer reaction, and not because he has any prejudice against blacks. Merton (1949) suggested a matrix in which a person may be a prejudiced discriminator, which he calls an "all-weather bigot", a prejudiced non-discriminator, which he calls a "timid bigot", an unprejudiced discriminator, a "fair-weather liberal", and an unprejudiced non-discriminator, an "all-weather liberal."

Taken together, these perspectives appear to define prejudice as an inflexible generalization about people, based on their membership in a "group." This opinion is usually negative and is often a mixture of feelings - antipathies - and beliefs, which are usually erroneous, since they are gross generalizations. Prejudices may not always be expressed in overt ways, although as we shall see in the section on teacher expectations, even if they are not overt, they are far from invisible. Such discriminatory behavior, subtle but observable, is central to this study.

On the other hand there is some measure of reason involved in forming certain prejudices. Prejudice can be seen as "an effort to give some coherence and order to a puzzling and complex value." (Yinger & Simpson, p. 146). Indeed, it is a basic tenet of cognitive psychology that we need to form categories to keep from being overwhelmed by the complexity of the world. If we could not do this, we would be "slaves to the particular" (Bruner, Goodnow & Austin, 1956). Allport begins his famous study, The Nature of Prejudice (1954) with a discussion of the mind's need to think with the aid of categories. As he says, "open-mindedness is considered to be a virtue. But, strictly speaking, it cannot occur. A new experience must be redacted into old categories" (p. 20). Otherwise, in the words of Burke, man would be left "hesitating in the moment...puzzled and unresolved."

In any case, the discussion of negative thoughts and feelings, and the expression of these prejudices in discriminatory behavior leads to two secondary points. First, it begs the question of causality. Discrimination is not necessarily the result of prejudice, although it is usually thought of that way. Second, it tends to blur the distinction of prejudice and discrimination in this study.

As to the first point, cognitive dissonance theory, first described by Leon Festinger in 1957, helps explain how discrimination can actually be a precursor of a prejudicial belief. Essentially, what that theory proposes is that we have a need to have consonance between our attitudes and our behavior. To dispel or resolve dissonance, we may even change our beliefs to fit our behavior. If, for example, a teacher treats a child unfairly in an attempt to establish control in a classroom, that teacher may rationalize that behavior by contending that the child's characteristics demanded that s/he be dealt with that way. To deal with the guilt of such actions, the person adopts a certain attitude as a justifying mechanism. Ultimately, the person's beliefs come into alignment with his/her behavior. In such a case, prejudice is the result of discrimination, and not a precursor of it (Farley, 1982). In a different way, attribution theory, a construct of psychology which attempts to explain perception of self and others, also sheds light on this mix of action and belief. If a teacher views the actions of a student, say, as failing to conform to a stereotype that teacher holds, the teacher may, instead, attribute that behavior to that individual person, or to the particular situation, in order to allow the stereotype to stand up to contradictory information. One way or the other the individual will fit the "facts" to his or her views. In these cases, it is much easier for prejudiced people to maintain their prejudice in the face of evidence which would fail to confirm their preconceptions, than it would be to accommodate their beliefs to the situation (Jones, et al., 1971; Vanlear, 1981). Again, this type of selective perception reminds one of Burke's contention that people seldom fail to find wisdom and truths in the prejudices that they hold.

As to the distinction between prejudice and discrimination, because of the fact that a person's actions may or may not betray his/her prejudices, and because such actions and beliefs are so intimately linked, the distinction between prejudiced thoughts and discriminatory behavior may not be particularly significant in a study such as this. That is, students are asked if any teachers are prejudiced, and why the students think so. What counts is simply the perception of prejudice. And that perception may be derived from many varied sources, from observations of overt actions and statements, to sensitivity to the most subtle of signs and sensations.

Teacher expectations

The second major source of relevant literature which will aid in understanding the ramifications of this research problem emanates from the field of teacher behavior as it relates to student achievement. Research into this area was given great impetus with the publication of Rosenthal and Jacobson's controversial and provocative Pygmalion in the Classroom in 1968. From that point a virtual industry grew around the purported connections between specific teacher behaviors and student achievement. One offshoot of that research direction was the growth of observational studies within classrooms, many of which were, and still are, concerned less with correlating process with product than with simply providing meaningful descriptions of classrooms. A great deal of this work is focused on teacher behavior toward different types of students. That teachers form differing expectations of students is natural. It is also understandable and appropriate as long as it is based on legitimate prior assessment of those individual students. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. Much of what is known about teacher behaviors, particularly in reference to high or low achievers, comes from the work of Brophy and Good (1978, 1980, 1986). They report clearly different types and modes of teacher behaviors toward different groups of students. Some of this different treatment might be seen as justifiable. For instance, in some studies, it was found that teachers praised lows more frequently than highs for marginal responses. One might surmise that this is an intentional instructional strategy designed to encourage or motivate students who might have low self esteem, which is frequently associated with low achievement. On the other hand, many teacher behaviors are of dubious value, and could be seen as betraying more negative and injurious attitudes - prejudices. Some of these behaviors which have been observed include smiling less often and maintaining less eye contact with low achievers, waiting less time for lows to answer questions, providing less accurate feedback to lows, seating them farther from the teacher, and interrupting low performers more frequently than highs (Good, 1981). These call for us to seek explanation beyond mere pedagogical techniques, to more serious underlying values and beliefs that teachers have. It is easy to believe that since many people do hold stereotypes of blacks in regard to potential achievement levels, that many black students are given differential treatment as mentioned above, simply because they are black. Establishing a definite connection between attitude and behavior is, at best, problematical. Nonetheless, findings such as Trujillo's (1986), that college teachers had significantly lower academic expectations of minority students, and interacted significantly differently with them, Clifton's (1981), that teachers have significantly different opinions of students based on their ethnicity, and those of Brophy and Good (1970), that teachers do, in fact, treat students differently according to the teacher's assessment of the student's chances of succeeding in school, tend to strongly indicate that a connection does exist, and that there are teachers who do automatically treat minority students as low achieving students.

There are, of course, numerous other studies which demonstrate that black students are, in fact, treated less favorably than white students. Cornbleth and Korth (1977) found that teachers perceived black students and white students differently. White students were viewed more positively in potential achievement, and also in personal characteristics. A number of student behaviors were examined, all of which were interpreted differently by teachers according to the race of the students. Hillman and Davenport (1978) found that black students received more criticism from teachers for their behavior, and were the recipients of greater teacher nonacceptance of questions or responses. Ironically, these students were also noted to have more self-initiated comments and also more relevant comments. It is tempting to speculate that this behavior was interpreted by teachers as threatening to their control and autonomy, leading to this defensive reaction. This finding is quite provocative when juxtaposed with some of Kochman's assertions that black style is frequently interpreted by whites as being contentious, when it reflects a cultural value of assertive/expressive behavior (1981).

In a case study of a black boy and a white boy from a kindergarten class who were both referred to the school psychologist, a researcher examined psychologist's records, interviewed families and observed the students' behavior, and concluded that the teacher "appeared to perceive the boys differently, behaved differently toward them, and tended to direct more positive actions for behavior improvement toward the white boy" (Emihovich, 1982). And Washington (1982) discovered in a study of teacher perceptions of first and fourth grade students, that both black and white teachers tended to view black children more negatively than white children. In fact, research on differential treatment of minority students is extensive.

Theorists ascribe the development of prejudices to all manner of mechanisms, from an innate tendency to generalize and to develop love and hate prejudices (Allport, 1954), through childrearing influences (Adorno, 1950), to prejudice as a personality disorder, learned from contact with people who harbor fears and hatreds (Clark, 1963). Regardless of the origins, many teachers, as well as many others, come to work harboring negative and hurtful stereotypes which are translated into discriminatory behavior.

At the same time, while many students are evidently judged by the color of their skin, many judgements are made on the basis of differences in cultural style, particularly as reflected in verbal and non-verbal communication. In 1952, Becker identified three areas in which social class differences are played out in schools: in teaching, discipline, and moral acceptability. Significantly, he found the students in different economic classes have different moral values that may make them "unacceptable" to teachers. In his study, the "worst" problems for teachers came in dealing with what were then called slum children. Today, this difference in cultural values occurs between teachers and the black underclass. We hear the terms "urban education," "inner city youth," and sometimes, "disadvantaged students," but the same clash in cultural values between teachers and "slum children" still occurs.

In a particularly relevant study, Hsia (1971) examined the attitudes of the teachers in Edwinton's District X schools (those involved in this study) three years after that district underwent a massive integration program. In that research, teachers rated black and white students as being equal in popularity and fairness. However, on a number of other dimensions, such as aggression, conscientiousness and cooperativeness, significant differences were found in teacher perception, always in favor of white students. Coincidentally, 14 years later, another study found that in at least one District X school, teachers still felt that black students were less cooperative than white students (Cole, 1985), indicating that there had not been a significant change in attitudes toward black and white students. It is not a great leap of reason to suggest that teachers still perceive blacks to compare unfavorably with whites on the other dimensions of that survey as well. What may be even more interesting is that if anything, research shows blacks tend to be more cooperative than whites (Kagan & Masden, 1970), so that we can say that not only do these teachers exhibit generalized, stereotyped thinking, but these particular generalizations are inflexible in the face of contrary evidence. It is also significant that these perceptions have not changed significantly over the years. By the definitions proposed in an earlier section of this paper, we would say these teachers are exhibiting prejudices. At the same time, we must make room for the possibility that precisely because these teachers harbor these negative thoughts about black students, and their feelings cannot remain totally hidden, they are responded to by a lack of cooperation on the part of the victims, validating to some degree, their perceptions. As Burke said, people seldom fail to find what they seek.

As this review indicates, teachers frequently hold negative opinions of minority students, not always deriving from sound objective data regarding student ability. When these opinions are expressed, even subtly, the results are extremely powerful. Simpson (1983) discovered that white teachers directed more non-verbal criticism toward black boys. Such non-verbal criticism represented rejection of work, ideas and personal and social behaviors. These expressions came in the form of vocal sarcasm, frowns, glares, sneers, raised eyebrows, gestures of negations such as head shakes, and leaning away from students in interactions. It is unlikely that such expressions of distaste, coming as they do as personal judgements, were undetected by the students, either black or white. One extremely important implication in this is in the power of the subtle act to suggest inferiority. One need not overtly criticize black students or call for their extermination to indicate disapproval - disapproval which may be sensed by *all* students. An interviewee in Robert Blauner's book, *Black Lives, White Lives* (1989) says, "Part of it *is* atmosphere. Part of it you can't grab your hand on; part of it's the sentence that isn't said; part of it's just the feeling; part of it's the gesture" (p. 109).

The results of these studies indicate that teachers may not rely solely on students' past performances, ability, or plans in their judgements of these students. It seems that such factors as ethnicity definitely come into play. If it is so that teachers' expectations are based on impressions or information irrelevant to academic success, it seems understandable that these expectations and opinions may "bias [these students'] interest in school and related activities and may contribute to their doing poorly" (Dusek, 1974, p. 652). It seems clear that teachers judge students on many criteria that are irrelevant to the actual academic tasks at hand, and that these judgements are expressed, rather than simply felt. In a study of grading practices, Leiter and Brown (1983) found, for instance, that "student conformity to teacher preferences for certain attitudes and behaviors consistently appeared to be one of the strongest determinants of grading." It becomes apparent that there is more than a little support for attributing failure in students to their race and dialect rather than their performance. Additionally, the subtle indication of a teacher's prejudices are not lost on the student subjects. "What counts is what the individual pupil experiences, and what a single pupil experiences is not necessarily what the teacher is teaching or what the class in general is experiencing" (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1985, p. 2). In addition, this experience does not only detract from self esteem. The cumulative effect of this phenomenon, particularly when it is not an isolated instance, is the establishment of some very subtle norms in all of the children. "Episodes demonstrating the prejudice of individual teachers may become important factors in the development of negative racial attitudes in children" (Rist, 1970, p. 412). Children's attitudes toward others are determined chiefly not by contact with them, but by contacts with the prevailing attitudes towards them (Clark, 1973). Convincing evidence for this is furnished in a study comparing the attitudes of students in New York City with attitudes of students in white, rural Georgia and Tennessee with reference to blacks. Their attitudes were virtually the same, despite the fact that one group lived in close proximity with blacks and the other group was effectively deprived of any contact whatsoever (Horowitz, 1936).

Much of this teacher behavior is, of course extremely subtle, even subconscious. Most teachers would vehemently deny they are prejudiced. But they do model a set of values, even if it is not intentional, and these behaviors occur so subtly and unintentionally that neither the teachers nor the students are consciously aware of their established patterns (Gay, 1987). It is worth noting that in experiments with children as well as adolescents, subjects generally rate their skin color lighter that it actually is (Clark, 1973). These behaviors even have impact on the relationships among students. Teachers' everyday attitudes and decisions have a major influence on the relationships that develop between black and white students (Schofield and Sagan, 1979).

Because teacher expectations frequently determine curriculum decisions, another area in which their prejudices are evinced is instructional grouping. It is beyond the scope of this study to delve into the ramifications of such practices, but they are implicated when examining how students are affected by expectations teachers hold of them. And whatever negative impressions teachers do hold of students, these are only exacerbated by unwelcome student behavior which is itself encouraged by grouping practices (Oakes, 1985; Rosenbaum, 1980).

The literature is, in a sense, unfortunately, abundant. Teachers set expectations which are based on the ethnic background of students rather than on the students' intellectual ability, their academic performance or their educational plans. The effects are wide-ranging and interconnected. Such discrimination precurses academic failure, poor self image, anti-social behavior, and impaired interracial relationships. What cries out for an answer is why such behavior goes virtually unchecked and ignored by the institutions themselves.

Sociolinguistics

A third body of research which informs analysis of the features of this study is the field of sociolinguistics, which can provide further insight into the effects of cultural differences on communication and behavior. Three of the best sources of information on the difficulties of cross-cultural communication are Gumperz and Tannen (1979), Luke (1986), and Kochman (1984, 1986a, 1986b, 1989). The premise from which these writers build theory essentially states that the way we speak reflects our culture. This manner of communicating is interpreted by others, and built into this interpretation are judgements, not only of the content of the communication, but of the characteristics of the speaker. Meanings of the words and behaviors of others are then reconstructed through the filter of one's own cultural experience. We have little choice but to interpret others' words and deeds with the meaning systems which we ourselves were raised with. According to Gumperz and Tannen, "constellations of surface features such as prosody, phonology, lexical choice, turn taking conventions, interjections, idiomatic or formulaic usages, and so on, are the means by which speakers signal and listeners interpret how semantic content is to be understood" (p. 308). However, since this content is constructed by the listener, "misunderstandings...generally lead to conclusions not about the other person's use of language, but about his ability or intentions" (p. 309). Of course, student-teacher interactions are subject to these dynamics as well. Luke (1986) says, "teachers often misconstrue verbal and non-verbal communication of children whose cultural (and possibly social class) background is dissimilar to their own...[which leads to] teachers' misreading of children's language and behavior as indicating insolence, resistance and even stupidity" (p.399). The theory is compelling, and is applicable to many diverse situations. To illustrate, Tannen (1986) points out that differences in communication patterns even cause conflicts in marriages - a coming together of people from diverse cultures (male and female) with their own unique styles of communicating. Her point is that different cultures, and their accompanying styles of communication, are exactly that - different - and not to be judged as somehow wrong. With regard to language, black English is not, as many teachers seem to feel, simply a corruption of Standard English (Labov, 1985), nor merely a "random collection of mistakes" (Kochman, 1989). Black English is, indeed, rule governed, and possesses a legitimate grammar of its own (Smitherman, 1985). Many teachers, however, having been socialized their whole life toward one cultural pattern and value orientation, apparently make value judgements when confronted by someone of an alien cultural linguistic style. For example, teachers in one study thought that children who spoke standard English were more intelligent that those who spoke Black English (Cecil, 1985). Torrey (1973) explains the effect of the teachers' negative attitudes toward black dialect on the overall educational experiences of black students in this way: "The main impact of Afro-American dialect on education has not been its structural differences from standard English, nor its relative intrinsic usefulness as a medium of thought, but its function as a low-status stigma and its association with a rejected culture. The attitude of teachers toward this dialect and of dialect speakers toward the teachers' language have affected the social relationships of children with the schools in such a way as to make the education of many children almost impossible" (p. 137). Kochman refers to such an attitude as an "unwarranted social arrogance, [which seems to assume] that mainstream American society has already reached a state of perfection" (p. 8). It is simply that some behaviors exhibited by students of different racial backgrounds are culturally determined, and these behaviors are often "incompatible with the normative expectations of schools and teachers" (Irvine, 1985, p. 116).

What this literature tells us, then, is that interactions between black students and white teachers, or between students and teachers of any different cultures, for that matter, may entail misunderstandings, erroneous and inappropriate judgements, and conflict because of the cultural differences between them, and because of the tendency of teachers to adhere to mainstream American values. "The problem of legitimacy is a continuing problem for black Americans who must function in a Eurocentrically dominated society" (Semmes, 1985, p. 273). These theories go far in helping us understand the nature of the interactions that may be so common in public schools today.

At the same time, this theory can enlighten us about a phenomenon which is the subject of much conversation in the interviews of this study. Teachers frequently shake their heads in dismay that with all the (alleged) effort at improving race relations, students are still found in the lunchroom to be sitting in pretty much single race groupings. Many white people accuse the black students of sitting together in an exclusionary manner. But, strictly speaking, that may not be the case, and it may be easier to understand if viewed from the standpoint of a sociolinguist. Gumperz and Tannen contend that what has "hitherto been labeled prejudice and clannishness is the tendency to feel more comfortable with those who share one's communicative system" (1979, p. 323). Sociolinguistics provides an important knowledge base for interpreting human interactions.

Social Structure

A fourth realm of research literature which can be instructive in interpreting the dynamics of student-teacher interactions concerns the social structure which surrounds schools, and that therefore determines many, if not all, of the dynamics within it. Student-teacher relationships are greatly influenced by factors which lie outside of the individuals involved. That is, while individual beliefs, values, judgements, thoughts, and opinions derive from a number of sources immediately related to the personal experience of those individuals, such as the way they were raised, and their contacts with others, there exists a large societal framework which exerts an overriding influence on its parts. Many writers in the so-called critical tradition (Anyon, 1980; Apple & King, 1977; Giroux & Penna, 1978), argue that school organization and processes are reconstructions of the class structure of society, replete with its hierarchy of power, and that schools are simply training the overclasses and underclasses to occupy those same positions when they graduate. William Beavers, a systems theorist, refers to this recapitulation of structure as an isomorphism, that presence of similar structure which occurs in seemingly dissimilar systems, or which occurs at different levels of a single hierarchy (1977). This theory, generally referred to as social reproduction theory, informs analysis of what schools contribute to the continuation of an unequal society (Everhart, 1983). At the same time, a correlate of the social reconstruction theory posits that in a reciprocal way, schools determine social structure. For instance, in contending that schools are instrumental in furthering the persistence of class inequality, Apple points out that because of the institutionalization of class distinctions within schools many of the students will remain "within the economic trajectories of their parents and the class fractions they represent" (in Everhart, 1983).

For much of the remaining analysis in this section, I rely a great deal on the ideas of John Ogbu, particularly those found in Minority Education and Caste (1983). These views do not represent a directly linear argument, but rather a series of interconnected observations. In brief, these concepts may be condensed into these basic points:

1. Blacks occupy a unique caste-minority status in America

2. Barriers to full participation in society exist for members of this minority

3. Adaptation to the presence of these barriers occurs in many segments of society and at many levels

4. Because of the above issues, for whites, school performance determines adult position achievement. For blacks, perception of potential adult achievement determines school performance.

I will briefly elaborate on these points, so that they might be instantiated for later application to and interpretation of this study. Ogbu contends that there exist three basic types of minorities in America: autonomous, caste, and immigrant. Immigrant minorities, such as the Chinese, have options and have always had options. Their immigration here, even if a result of deteriorating social or economic status, was always reversible. They have always had the option of moving back, or at least, moving away from the United States. While their hosts see many jobs as demeaning, the immigrant minorities find the jobs easy, relatively high paying, and they find they are happier than they would be in their native land.

Autonomous minorities are those whose minority status arises from their ethnic identity. They are not stratified with respect to the dominant group and function more or less along side the dominant group. Jews in the United States, for example, occupy this role.

Caste minorities are regarded by the dominant group as inherently inferior. They are seen as intrinsically polluted, and are stigmatized and excluded from mainstream participation. They are frequently assigned to do dirty, demeaning work. Blacks occupy this unique type of minority status in the United States.

The second point is that barriers exist for full and equal participation in society for caste minority members. For instance, level of education is not the only determining factor in who gets what job. Black and white differences in unemployment rates increase as the level of education increases. That is, for blacks and whites, as the level of education rises, higher and higher percentages of whites are hired as compared to blacks. This is translated into a virtual job ceiling, above which blacks seldom rise, despite their level of education. This differential may be inferred from a recent article in the Chicago Tribune (Curry, 1989). Black male workers working full time earned 72.9% of the amount of white male workers' earnings. Blacks occupy 57.4% the number of managerial or professional occupations that whites occupy.

Further testimony to this discrepancy was reported at a conference on the underclass and urban poverty at Northwestern University (Reardon, 1989). Results of over 20 years of research show a widening gap between the earnings of similarly educated blacks and whites. For young black males from poor neighborhoods, their hourly pay is 16% less than white counterparts from similar high-poverty neighborhoods. And for 25 year old white women who graduated from high school, and did not get pregnant before age 20, their median family income was $28,600 when they reached the age of 25. For black women in the same category, the median income was $17,700. Blacks continue to lose economic ground even when they follow the traditional American stepping stones to success (Ellwood, 1989).

Recently, a television investigative team reported that better qualified black job applicants were being rejected at some employment agencies over less qualified white people. This has led the New York State Attorney General to bring suit against several employment agencies that use code words to disguise illegal racial discrimination, and make sure minorities, no matter how well qualified, are not sent to jobs "reserved" for whites (CBS News, 1990).

Another expression of the limits to full participation can be seen by examining housing patterns. That people enjoy, and, indeed, need to have contact with people like themselves is self-evident. Yet, housing patterns of extreme isolation and "hypersegregation" place blacks in a "unique and distinctly disadvantaged position in the U.S. urban environment" (Massey & Denton, 1989, p. 390). Lest anyone suggest that blacks might be selecting this particularly depressing state of affairs, attention should be given to bank lending policies. Statistics reveal, for instance, that Chicago area savings and loan associations reject mortgage applicants from black and Hispanic areas up to three times more often than applicants from white areas. Significantly, the rejection rates are not always related to income levels. Indeed, statistics show that residents of low-income white neighborhoods are more likely to obtain mortgages than residents of more affluent black neighborhoods. From low income to upper income, and between minority and white applicants, white acceptance rates are all higher than minority rates ("Lending," 1989).

Of critical importance here is the point that these barriers, real as they are, are not perceived nor appreciated by those in the dominant group. In one study conducted at a large midwestern university, white students tended to see equality of opportunity for blacks and whites in career development chances. And white males perceived blacks as having more than an equal chance of being hired (Thomas, 1977). Despite the establishment of affirmative action policies in many sectors of the workplace, this perception does not reflect reality. In a study of high school students, among whites, perceptions of racial favoritism appeared to be less important than for blacks (Patchen, 1982). Overman (1980) asked students, parents and teachers in an elementary and secondary school, to indicate whether each item on a list of 13 school related problems was, "not a problem," "a minor problem," or a "major problem." Items on the questionnaire included prejudice/racial conflict, student misbehavior, poor curriculum, poor teachers, size of school/classes, busing for integration, rules and regulations, lack of parent interest, administration, staff relations, and the like. When the items are rank ordered from "not a problem" to "a major problem", of the 19 issues, prejudice was lowest priority for white parents, close to lowest for white students, and too low to be ranked for teachers. Black parents and students ranked the issues much nearer the top. Campbell and Schuman (1970), examined white beliefs about black job and housing opportunities and discovered that a number of whites do not acknowledge the presence of racial discrimination at all. For instance, one question on a survey asked, "On the average, blacks have worse jobs, education and housing than white people. Do you think it is due to discrimination, or something about blacks, themselves?" While 19% of the respondents said it was due to discrimination, and 19% said it was a mixture, 56% of the respondents said that it was due to something about blacks, themselves. Over 12% of respondents said that NO blacks miss out on jobs and promotions because of racial discrimination. It appears that the caste minority status which blacks occupy in the U.S. is all but invisible to many whites. The reasons for this may be complex and virtually impossible to determine. The lesser importance of perceived favoritism among white students than among black students may reflect the fact that black students were more likely than whites to see discrimination by school staff against their race. Perhaps whites become annoyed at what they see to be favoritism toward blacks and the issue of discrimination does not arouse their feelings. Blacks are, after all, aware of and sensitive about a long, painful history of discrimination. It also seems likely that any black advancement will be seen by some whites as threatening to their own security.

The result of the differential in opportunities leads to adaptive behaviors within the caste minorities and is reflected in institutional differences in treatment of these minorities. And this is different from other minorities because caste minorities see the barriers against full participation in society as either not changing, or changing at a discouragingly slow pace. And because they perceive their future chances for jobs and other benefits of education as limited, they are not so strongly motivated as the dominant group members to persevere in their school work. As caste groups, blacks and whites have tended to occupy two different worlds which require different attitudes, values, personalities, skills, and behavior patterns. In order to produce the kinds of people who will adapt to such different worlds, according to Ogbu, the caste system requires different modes of training young members of both groups. These different modes are, in schools, "subtle devices embodied in the policies and practices within the schools...[which] unconsciously encourage black students to fail academically, drop out earlier than whites, and enter post-school society with just so much education as the dominant group considers appropriate" (p. 132) for their social and economic roles. Some of these devices are more subtle than others. Those mentioned by Ogbu include teacher attitudes and expectations, testing and misclassification and tracking, different standards of academic performance, ability grouping, and biased texts and curricula.

Generations of inferior education no doubt have contributed to a sense of hopelessness that has then contributed to lower school performance of black children. "Parents who have themselves not experienced the full benefit of their education because of the job ceiling do not often encourage their children to do well in school" (p. 190). The restriction of black parents largely to low level social roles and occupations, and the lack of opportunity to advance in their roles or positions through their abilities or education "probably prevents them from training their children effectively to develop competitive attitudes and persistent efforts toward school work" (p. 200). They simply are disillusioned about the myth of "work hard and do well in school, and you will be a success just like anyone else." This disillusionment is a significant contributor to their lower academic attainment. Black and white people raise their children differently because, among other reasons, there is a difference in status mobility between blacks and whites. Since for whites, mobility can be based on education, schooling has a particular value, as do initiative and academically competitive skills. For blacks, adaptation to the system causes development of a different set of coping skills and behaviors: manipulation, dependency, compliance, and a reliance on the patronage of others. Interestingly enough, this tendency to become a dependent learner is probably intensified (or vice versa) by harsh treatment by teachers. In discussing criticism of low performing students, Good says, "As long as students feel there is more risk in making errors than there is payoff in learning, they will remain passive learners" (1981). This adaptive behavior on the part of parents, and the structure of school as a training ground for future roles are seen as the predominant explanation for the different function that education provides for white and black students. Again, in Ogbu's words, "It therefore seems to me that the school and the home are not the ultimate source of influence on school performance. Both are the media through which the influences of the caste system are transmitted to the black child. And these influences, to a large extent, condition the child's behavior in school" (p. 141). The forgoing theoretical framework is provided as an umbrella theory under which we may place the other research domains of this study.

Child development

A fifth area of literature remains to be examined - that of child development. The study is based, of course, on young adolescents, both as the living subjects and as the reporters on those lives. Consequently, it is incumbent on the researcher to determine the extent to which the age of these people is a pertinent variable, and to factor that into the analysis. First, it is necessary to place the young subjects of this study in the proper overall perspective. In some circles, it is accepted practice to consider young teenagers as temporarily deranged, a condition to be tolerated until they reach adulthood. Indeed, although this view is sometimes expressed tongue in cheek, they do sometimes appear to be a species unto themselves. But as Daniel Offer (1988) points out, while mental health literature tends to picture adolescents as problematic, impulse-ridden, etc., (he cites the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 1980*, as one source of this view), they are basically fine. They are free of serious psychopathology and relate well to adults and family. Whatever stage of development they are in, socially, emotionally, physically, cognitively, they are fundamentally all right. At the same time, we understand that the onset of puberty makes this a typically rocky period in human development, sometimes characterized by erratic and unpredictable changes in mind and body.

In terms of mental growth, this is an age of transition in which most youngsters still have not developed the capability to reason abstractly. As cognitive capacities change, from concrete to formal, in Piagetian terms, children become more capable of attaining deductive reasoning. This shift to the formal permits them to "escape the compulsion toward the immediate, the tangible...which so limits the political discourse of younger adolescent children" (Adelson, 1986). Inhelder and Piaget (1958) have determined that this major shift in thinking occurs anywhere from ages 11 to 15, but after age 15 not a lot more happens. In fact, they say that by the time a boy is 18, he is the 15 year old, only more so. It will be several more years before formal capacities are fully under control, however. Another feature of this stage of development is that the capacity to conceive many different alternatives is not yet coupled with the ability to establish priorities, and to decide which choice is more appropriate than others. It is this quality of cognitive immaturity that helps explain some of the perplexing affective behavior exhibited by adolescents (Elkind, 1978).

Other writers also address the way in which cognitive development is revealed in, and helps explain, children's political thinking. Young adolescents tend to personalize everything because of the egocentric type of thinking they are doing. They cannot conceive of large, abstract concepts without simplifying and personalizing them. In fact, they do not, because they cannot, adopt a sociocentric perspective. As a result, they have rather inconsistent and "disorderly" political perspectives. "When younger subjects are cross examined, however gently, they are ready to reverse themselves even on issues they seem to feel strongly about" (Adelson, 1986, p.74). According to Haviland and Scarborough (1981), while early adolescents may be able to state political party preferences, for example, or appear to know the history of national situations, such as, perhaps, the history of racial prejudice in America, they usually do not grasp political ideas in the sense of knowing how to define political concepts. These are apparently too abstract, cognitively, for them. As a matter of fact, student political thought appears to be a very simple and concrete entity. Political statements made at this age actually are seldom very strong, and often "boil down to nothing more than which radio station you listen to, or which clothes you buy" (Santrock, 1981).

A somewhat contradictory position is taken by Coles

(1986). He contends that adolescents do, in fact, have well developed political views, if not totally accurate or sophisticated. They do, of course live in political worlds, in both the large, governmental sense, and in the more local, social and personal sense. It is in reference to these worlds that they exhibit surprisingly enlightened views. Coles contends that children's political lives are simply unexamined, and therefore, not appreciated, or even acknowledged by many.

Another view of the fundamentally apolitical and asociocentric orientation is based on interpretation of their psychological lives. Deutsch (1967) a Freudian psychoanalyst, sees adolescents as more anxiety ridden than does, say, Offer. She refers to the adolescent's search for relief from the anxiety of the dynamics inherent in this stage of psychosocial development. It is the feeling of identity with the group, the sense of "we" that safeguards the adolescent against this anxiety.

In Erikson's (1963) view of development, adolescents are in the stage of development identified by the conflict between identity and role confusion - Stage 5: Fidelity. Erikson argues that this is a period of uprootedness. It is characterized by preoccupation with the establishment of peer relations, sexual identity, and occupational goals. Erikson notes that in no other stage are the promise of finding oneself and the threat of losing oneself so closely allied. It is, therefore, a period in which one is driven to establish identity. And again, it is this drive for identity that is behind the need for a peer society. That they dress and act very much alike, indeed down to the style of Air Jordans or Nikes many wear, lies "paradoxically in their 'self-assertion' they achieve through the repudiation of their own individuality and their acceptance of identity with others. This is indeed a peer society - but without any other goals than the search for identity" (Deutsch, p. 24).

It is also their identity confusion which helps explain their trust and confidence in authority. They find it hard to imagine that authority may be irrational, presumptuous, or whimsical (Adelson, 1986). Younger adolescents imagine that people in authority are good people and that people who break laws are not good people. They are less likely to see the possible arbitrariness in authority or to look for mistakes from authority figures. Along these lines, Zingler and Finn-Stevenson (1987), citing three separate studies, contend that adolescents are less influenced by peers than adults only when it comes to substantive issues such as future goals, vocational plans, and the like. This may explain why they are so susceptible to teacher behaviors which are related to large scale issues such as expectations of students. It may also be that the interaction of all these influences led Rosenbaum (1980) to contend that curriculum groupings define the social esteem that students receive in school.

What is clear is that youngsters at this age are typically going through a number of changes, inside and out. Developmental theorists can add something to our understanding of this stage in human development that may reveal insight into their ways of interacting with others, their ways of thinking, and the reports of these behaviors.

Literature from five different domains has been described. Each field provides a source of illumination from a different direction with which to view the central features of this study. Each of these five fields of research informs this study from important perspectives. Literature on prejudice determines in the most general way the scope of this study. Research from the field of teacher expectations places the study in the educational context and focuses us on the more specific topic of classroom interactions. At heart, this study deals with human relations and the nature of the communications between people. The field of sociolinguistics, which is in many ways the central piece here, brings the question of communication and culture to the fore. Social structural theory provides a larger framework for this study, since schools reflect the norms and values of the larger society around them. It will be suggested that in some ways, certain features of an inequitable social class structure are not only reflected in schools, but reinforced, particularly with regard to the status of minorities. Finally, the field of child development is important in interpreting the reports of the subjects of the study. As young teens, their reports might best be understood if one is somewhat clear on the nature of adolescence and how that might affect their perceptions and their reports. What follows is a discussion of the methodology, the presentation of the actual data collected in this study, and the interpretation of those data, examined in the light of this literature review.

Chapter III: Methodology

Research design

Psychologist Gordon Allport, a seminal figure in the study of racial prejudice said, "If you want to know something about peoples' activities, the best way of finding out is to ask them" (Brenner, Brown, & Canter, 1985, p. 212). This tenet underlies the research approach taken in this study. Eighteen high school freshmen and their junior high school principals were interviewed over a course of approximately seven weeks. The interviews were audiotaped and transcribed for analysis at a later time. In the central part of each interview, students were asked for their recollections and reflections on their 7th and 8th grade years, with particular focus on issues of race and student-teacher interactions. Two reasons that high school freshmen were chosen are that, one, their distance from junior highs school and the added maturity of one year should give them some clearer perspective, and two, they will not have been in high school for so long that they have been completely taken over by that culture and have forgotten what junior high school was all about. The plan for the project originally included a short pilot study at the beginning. The purposes of the pilot were to determine the most fruitful and productive interviewing strategies, and to develop a set of evocative questions that would elicit the most valuable information. As it turned out, the first three interviews served those purposes, but were too rich a source of data to be ignored.

Selection

According to Goetz and LeCompte (1984) the group that was interviewed constituted a selection rather than a sample. The distinction becomes more clear when one realizes that a sample is a term reserved for random selection. Random selection is most appropriate when generalizability is a salient objective, which it was not in this case. The purpose of this investigation was mainly descriptive of a phenomenon, and did not require representativeness. Furthermore, the interviews originally involved only about twelve people. The ideal representation from the three feeder schools would be four people each. It is unlikely that a random sample would yield this distribution. Additionally, it was in the interest of the study to get reports from people from different ethnic and cultural perspectives. This required a purposeful selection of students, as opposed to a random sample. Three other factors entered into the selection process. First, in order to get the most from the interviews, it was important that the students be articulate and willing to discuss the topic with the interviewer. Second, a "good" informant for this type of interview would necessarily be one who could be characterized as "aware." Some students seem to be keenly attuned to human relations and to the subtle as well as obvious aspects of socialization. Others seem to go through the day oblivious to almost everything. Third, it is desirable to have students who probably were in the same social milieu, to increase the likelihood of their reporting on similar experiences. And as Rosenbaum (1980) has discovered, the academic groupings are coincidental with the social groupings. Furthermore, we know that in schools that group students according to achievement, the high and low groups are the least racially integrated, the high groups being predominantly white and the low groups being predominantly black (Oakes, 1985). Students from the middle level are most likely to have been in integrated circumstances and are most likely to have experienced interracial interactions.

Therefore, in response to the request of the researcher, the principal of the Freshman School, a division of the local high school, met with the counseling staff to explain the study and to request an initial list of some twenty students who exhibit the general requirements of this study. Specifically, those requirements were that they be equally divided by sex, race and feeder school. They were considered to be articulate and aware, and they were unknown to the researcher, who by virtue of his long history as a teacher in the parallel elementary school district, knows many of the students at the high school. Twenty students were initially requested in hopes that even with some attrition due to reluctance to participate, the interview group would yield at least twelve students. In fact, fourteen students agreed to be interviewed.

It is possible that high achieving and low achieving students perceive and report events differently from the target group, and may, in fact, have significantly different experiences on which to report. Therefore, four additional students were included to probe the possibility that achievement level is a significant factor in understanding the phenomena under consideration. These four students were selected during the summer school session, only by their grade point averages. Two students with the highest GPA's and two among the lowest were selected to be included with the group. This made for 18 subjects altogether.

A second component of the research design was the inclusion of three interviews with the principals of the three junior high schools involved in this study. I was looking for the principals' views on the nature of their particular schools, and asked them about the types of interactions which occur (observed directly as well as reported to them), the primary racial issues which they perceive in their schools, and the ways and extent to which these issues have been addressed in recent years. I did not know if the student interviews would indicate that significant differences exist from school to school. If that turned out to be the case, then an administrator's point of view on the school would provide additional salient perspective with which to interpret the student reports.

Procedure

When the names of the students had been selected, a meeting was set up in which I met with small groups of potential participants. Students were familiarized with the general scope and sequence of the research. They were told they had been selected to participate in some research into student-teacher interactions, and their help was solicited. Each was given an explanatory letter (Appendix B) that would serve as a parent permission form if they chose to participate. Tentative interview schedules were set up to permit students to be interviewed during their study hall or advisory periods. Each interview lasted 30-50 minutes and was done in the privacy of a conference room at the high school. Student and interviewer sat across a table from each other or at the side and end of a table, with a tape recorder on the table between them.

As Goetz and LeCompte (1984), suggest, this was a "nonstandardized" interview, in that it was not structured by specific questions asked in a specific order. Rather, it was made of a series of general guidelines with an overall framework, based on the area of inquiry described. In some cases the order of these general topics as listed here proved to be good, as it moves from the background of the student, through his/her experience in general, to the specific area in which I am interested. In other cases, particularly in response to what appeared to be a fruitful area in any particular interview, or in response to a sensation that certain areas might better be left alone, a different order seemed appropriate. The interview guide that was used in each of the interviews from the fourth interview on is included as Appendix C.

The general topic areas in the original order were:

a) family background and history
b) the 7,8 years in school - an overview
c) groups, social grouping practices
d) student/student, student/teacher interactions
e) racial climate
f) hearsay
g) effects and results of prejudice

An informal suspicion was being checked by the inclusion of the first topic area. The underlying assumption derived from the realization that students who were 14 or 15 years old in 1989, and who were, of course, born in 1974 or 1975, could easily be children whose parents were among the politically active youth of the 1960's. Thinking that these 1960's protestors would themselves have become parents during the mid 70's, I posited that many of the interviewees would be children of people who fought civil rights or anti-war battles. Taking this a step further, I expected to find a difference in political and social awareness between the students whose parents were politically active, and those whose parents were not.

In addition to the interviews themselves, two secondary data sources were instrumental in this study, a system-wide attitude survey, and an informal classroom survey. Each was used in two ways. First, they provided insight into the attitudes and beliefs of the students with regard to race, prejudice and self-concept. This gave meaningful background to the interviewer. Second, they functioned as references in each of the interviews. Interviewees were asked to comment on the data, giving all interviews a significant common point of discussion.

The first was an attitude survey administered to the subjects of this study while they were still in 7th and 8th grade. Every year since 1968, the first year of Edwinton's voluntary desegregation plan, the school district has administered to all students an attitude survey (Levinson, 1986). This survey was designed to provide an additional source of information on the effectiveness of the decision to integrate the schools. Data selected for use in the present study come from the results of the survey that this cohort took in the 1986-1987 and 1987-1988 school years. Of the 25 questions on the survey, five were considered to possess relevance to this study. In the survey, students are presented with a series of statements. They are directed to mark whether they agree, somewhat or strongly, or whether they disagree, somewhat or strongly. The questions used, and the results of the survey, both district-wide (total) and by race, are shown in Appendix D. The data show intriguing differences in responses between black and white children. Those questions with the greatest difference were, themselves, used as a stimulant to conversation in the student interviews. For ease of discussion in the interviews, "strongly agree" and "somewhat agree" were condensed into "agree." Likewise, "somewhat disagree" and "strongly disagree" became "disagree." Appendix E shows the data in this simplified form.

The second supplemental data source employed in this study was an informal survey given to a different group of 7th and 8th graders. The survey, originally unrelated to this study, was given to students in five classrooms in District X during the same year that the study was done. It was originally administered as a values clarification exercise as part of one teacher's informal middle school homeroom program. The questions (Appendix F), were asked of 80 students. The responses, while not formally coded in a detailed manner, did reveal certain trends. Specifically, in the question on the observation of prejudice (#4), over one half of the students indicated in one way or another, that they have observed prejudice "everywhere." In the majority of questionnaires, students were able to cite instances of prejudice either in school or in the community. Indeed, almost 50% of the students actually used the word "everywhere" in their comments. Both the District X attitude survey and the informal classroom survey proved to be important discussion starters in all of the interviews.

Chapter IV: Presentation of Data

Data analysis

The questions asked of the students in these interviews were designed to provoke thought and discourse. What was reported in these conversations was a wide range of viewpoints concerning the domains of race and prejudice. As could be expected, students answered different questions with varying degrees of enthusiasm and interest. This led the interviews into all manner of tangents and directions as the conversations meandered back and forth around the central issues. Some students did not answer some questions. Some questions were not asked of some students. They all covered slightly different material and each in unique ways. Each reply reflected a particular set of experiences. As a result, the wide range and style of interview comments initially presented a significant analytical problem. These 21 conversations, each many pages long in transcript, represented an enormous amount of data. In an attempt to derive meaning from them, several analytical schemes were tried.

First, each conversation was taken apart topic by topic. A large chart was generated on which the left vertical axis held student names and the top horizontal axis held categories. These categories were formed from examining the interviews and trying to carve them down into frequently discussed topics. Each student's comments pertaining to these categories were entered onto the chart with the hopes that some patterns would emerge. It was anticipated, for instance, that black children would report prejudice in white teachers more frequently than white children, and that such a pattern would emerge on this chart. Additionally, I had expected to be able to see correspondences across categories. For instance, the theory I had been informally examining was that there would be a high correlation between white children of politically active parents and white children who seemed to be aware of racial prejudice toward black children. The categories on the chart included such topics as voting habits of parents, operational definitions of prejudice, value judgements about prejudiced behavior, statements rationalizing prejudicial behavior, answers to specific questions (e.g. the "treated fairly" question), and how people got along in the lunchroom. Once pertinent comments from the conversations were entered onto the chart, attempts were made to discern patterns or trends. Initially, the names of the students were placed in the order in which the interviews occurred. The chart was then cut apart into horizontal strips which included all comments from each individual, distributed into these categories. The strips were then rearranged in several orders. The first grouping was based on race. All black students' comments were placed together, and all white students' comments were placed together. When the resulting grouping was examined and the two groups compared, no meaningful differences between the groups was evident. The strips were reorganized and divided into two different groupings, boys and girls. Again, no significant differences were detected. Other organizing patterns tried included school attended, family political background, and apparent school achievement levels. In no case was there a clear-cut pattern in any of the categories.

A second type of analysis was attempted in order to see if any trends or patterns were being overlooked. In this plan, the most common responses were charted. If any student mentioned during the course of the interview that, say, there was no teacher prejudice, that was entered, along with who said it, on a large wall chart which listed 43 statements or expressions which were common to two or more conversations. Then, when all comments were entered from all the conversations, patterns and trends were sought which might point to the significance of certain variables suspected of being pertinent to the study. Again, no clear patterns were evident. The only conclusion that could be made with reference to analysis of data at that point was that since the anticipated differences between students who attended different schools did not emerge, the commentary of the principals of those schools would not be needed.

However, this is not to say that the students were unable to provide information which was critical to answering the questions asked by this study. The main thrust of this study was to determine the extent to which students are aware of racial prejudice in their junior high school experiences. In their varied ways these students told me the answer to that question. They were, indeed, aware of many aspects of racial prejudice, including its expression in the interactions between students and teachers, subtle as it may be. That some were more aware than others is not surprising, and those that were most articulate are represented in this chapter. Therefore, instead of numerical data, what is presented here are interview excerpts, some very brief, and some extensive, because what is most revealing is the actual conversation of these students. It is the very human nature of the subject matter of communication and personal interaction that demands that such an approach be used.

The excerpts have been selected either because they illustrate certain points particularly effectively, or because they are provocative, compelling, or moving. Still, presentation of the data presents difficulties. Almost every student interview covered a wide range of topics, usually intertwined, and sometimes somewhat internally contradictory. Students said similar things, but no two students' comments coincided entirely. So it is not possible to list first all student comments on, say, lunchroom interactions, then to list all student commentary on student-teacher interactions. Such a format would be cumbersome and not particularly useful. Case study presentation would certainly give more complete pictures of some of the students, but would necessitate eliminating commentary from others in the interest of efficiency. Given the richness of these reports, that would not be satisfactory. Consequently, what is presented here are several segments from the students' comments organized for the sake of convenience of presentation into three broad thematic categories. These categories are:

1) The Question:
   on the central question as to whether prejudice does or does not exist (treated in a two-part section); if students have observed it; if teachers are, in fact, prejudiced; and any evidence which supports such claims.

2) The Concept:
   on the idea of prejudice, itself; personal definitions of the term; value judgements on prejudice and people who exhibit prejudice; opinion on the sources and causes of prejudice; ways to reduce prejudice.

3) Interactions:

on the semblance of discrimination among students; the appearance of racial groupings in the schools; student friendships; social grouping practices.

One thing that will be seen in these excerpts will be commentary that evokes much of the literature that has been cited in Chapter 2. The students "produced" many statements and observations which coincide closely and resonate forcefully with the findings of researchers referred to in the review of the literature. Some students are cited several times here as their remarks were so closely aligned with the thinking of writers mentioned. In some cases, the parallels will be very strong. Some attempt has been made to direct attention to these points of agreement. On the other hand, in many ways, the decision to present the data in this way reflects the fact that the words of the students speak for themselves, and many of their observations are included without additional commentary.

The absence or the presence of prejudice

The interview material centering on the presence or absence of teacher prejudice can be seen as loosely fitting into one or sometimes two of these general categories:

a) students think it exists
b) students are sure it does
c) students think it does not exist
d) students have seen it
e) students have not seen it

In some interviews, a) or b) was reported alone. Sometimes they were accompanied by d) and sometimes they were accompanied by e). There are also numerous instances in which two seemingly contradictory positions are taken by a student in different parts of the interview. In some cases, for example, a student reported, usually early in the interview, that no teachers were prejudiced. Later in that same interview, that student discussed differential treatment of students, apparently based solely on race. In the framework of this study, that would constitute prejudice, and in fact many students would define it as such.

As the interviews progressed and took on their own shape and direction, many of the questions in my original protocol were changed, reframed, rephrased or simply ignored, while others were added. In large measure, the responses are answers to a question I posed on fair treatment, which served as a synonymous concept with a lack of prejudice. Specifically, the question was usually phrased like this:

> Remember the attitude survey you took every year in District X? It asked you questions like, "My teachers like me," "I am happy in school," etc. Now, when you look at the results of that survey, you notice that on one question, "My teachers treat me fairly," over one third of the black kids said, no, my teachers don't treat me fairly, but nowhere near as many white kids said that. How do you explain that?

Another provocative question that led to statements about the presence of prejudice was this:

> I gave a different survey to some students in District X. I asked them, "Where do you see prejudice?" Over half of them said, "I see it everywhere, in schools, downtown, etc." Now, how do you explain that so many kids said that they see prejudice in schools?

And, occasionally, the question was asked more directly, such as, "Did you ever think your teachers were prejudiced?"

The first excerpts that follow indicate that teachers were not racially prejudiced. All are intended to illustrate a belief, reported by 78% of the students, that prejudice does not appear or occur in junior high school teachers. This would correspond to position c), they think it does not exist. This figure will prove to be quite misleading, however, as many of those same students wound up discussing some very clear instances of racial prejudice, as well as some not so clear instances, many of which will be illustrated later.

It should be emphasized here that conversations such as these with teenagers are seldom simple and to the point. Indeed, some of the students spoke eloquently on some topics, while others were nearly mute. Some were poetic, while some were prosaic. Some were insightful of subtleties and nuance, and others were superficial and shallow. Some interview subjects talked on and on and said little, while others spoke little, but were profound. Some answers were clearly focused, well-formed, and considered. Some were unclear, ambiguous and contradictory. Several of them did not elaborate their answers in any way when asked if their teachers were prejudiced. They merely said no.

Not all were so reticent, however. Iris, for example, was more open. Iris is a thoughtful, vivacious, energetic red head. She is lively and candid, and has an open, smiling face. She looks you right in the eye and answers questions almost before they are finished. Immediately at ease, she started the interview by sitting in the chair with one leg up, knee under her chin, grasping her shin. Frequently shifting her positions, she seemed a bundle of energy. At the end of a jam-packed 40 minute interview, in which she was "speed-speaking" almost non-stop, she said as she was leaving the room, "I could talk for hours." I did not doubt it. I told her, "I could listen." To read a transcript of an interview with Iris, and get the flavor for her mile-a-minute style, it is necessary to read it aloud, almost as fast as possible. Underlined words are those that she gave extra stress to, but her speech is animated and punctuated with much emphasis. At times, one might suspect that she is "shooting from the lip" when she answers a question, as the thoughts seem to gain focus only after she has spoken for a few moments. Despite this, her insightful comments give the impression that at one time or another, she has, indeed, contemplated many of these ideas before, and that the flighty aspect of her speech and manner is simply bridled energy. She is an impressive kid.

In this exchange, she contends that there was no conspicuous racial prejudice in her junior high experience.

Int: What about teachers' attitude toward kids? Were all the kids treated the same whether they were black or white?

Iris: I don't know if it necessarily meant if you were black or white. I think it was just like - they - it had - students weren't treated the same not because of their race. Just because, you know, maybe, maybe, you know, they would hear from beforehand or whatever, they would see that they were acting out in another class so, well, well, "That's a hoodlum," "That's a..." So it had nothing to do with race, but kids were not treated fairly...Well, I can - Actually I can think - I am trying to think - I am trying to think of - see there is one teacher who just - who was just - she was just rude. She was rude to everyone, but maybe because I wasn't really - I mean I didn't look at it like - I didn't... See, my outlook isn't like, "Oh, well, she is being rude because I am white or she's being rude because they..." I couldn't probably answer the question very fairly because I don't look at it like that, because I didn't say, "Oh, see, she is being rude to him so she must be prejudiced

> because he is black and she is white or she's being prejudiced." You know, so I don't know. I can't answer that question. I can't. I have no comment to it because I didn't realize it, but maybe that was because I wasn't aware. I wasn't having my antennas out to was she being treated fairly. People weren't treated fairly but I don't know if it was necessarily because of their race. It just might have been, but I don't know...No one ever - no one ever said, you know, "You Nigger boy" or "Come over here," so it - there probably, I am sure there was some vague, you know, like, but no one ever came out and said, "Oh well, you are stupid because you are black," or, you know,"That must have been because you ride around," you know- no one ever, it really never, really came to that. No, I can, I can maybe, I don't know why, but I just can't - maybe I don't know why because I don't really look at the situations like that. I don't look - I always try to see good in situations so maybe I wouldn't look at it like that.

Three critical points sounded in Iris' comments are to be echoed in subsequent student remarks. First, she acknowledges the possibility that "some vague...you know" sort of prejudice does exist. Second, she claims that what differential or "unfair" treatment existed was based on individual behavior as opposed to racial discrimination. Third, she points out that she does not want to see differential treatment of students as being based on race.

Larry, a quiet white boy from a very politically active and aware home, was an astute observer of the social milieu at his junior high school, as some of his later comments will illustrate. Here, he discusses that aspect of Iris's observation that any harsh treatment of students is a direct result of their individual (mis)behavior, as opposed to its being a result of a generalized reaction to people of a certain color. When asked if any of his teachers were prejudiced, he said,

Larry: I don't really think so. I can't remember. I keep on remembering hearing basically when shouts of prejudice were yelled at the teachers it was basically a substitute.

Int: OK.

Larry: That's what I remember.

Int: Now would the shouts be - would it be a type of prejudice against black kids or against white kids?

Larry: Against blacks.

Int: OK. That is kind of an accusation that you would hear from time to time.

Larry: Yeah, basically, I mean it was like when a substitute did look like - sometimes I mean they would be punishing a lot of black kids for acting out and this one girl stood looking "You're prejudiced, why aren't you punishing any white kids?" I just thought to myself, well, one, they are not spitting spit balls; two, they are not swearing across the room; and three they are not running around the room hitting each other. I mean there was like four kids that were doing that and they got punished. And, there was one white kid who also - he got punished and but it was four to one but I mean there was only one to be punished

Int: Ok. So she accused him of racism or prejudice, but you saw it as a justified . . .

Larry: Yeah, I am not saying that black kids would act out all the time. That's how it was and there were about four black kids who were acting out and one white kid and they all got punished. I am not sure if it wasn't unfound. I mean she might have - I don't know but I just don't really think there was a lot of racism.

Int: OK. Would there be any prejudice against white kids?

Larry: I don't think so.

Catron, a white girl with long brown hair, which she stroked more or less constantly as she spoke, was quiet and reserved, particularly at the beginning of the interview. She spoke with a slight lisp, and appeared quite shy, despite the fact that her diction seemed to betray her roots in the tough, Northeast side of the nearby large city. She quickly warmed to the task, however, and was soon quite animated. Catron, too, rejected the contention that racial prejudice is behind "unfair" treatment of students. Like Iris and Larry, she appears to believe that students are judged by their individual performance and deeds. I asked her to explain why more black kids reported unfair treatment in the District X survey.

Catron: I don't know, I kind of see that as an excuse. Maybe a lot of people, when you don't get something you want they're "Oh, that's just because I'm black." But that's not it at all, for me, anyway. Maybe, that is, but I don't see it that way. So, I just see that as, maybe they're not getting good grades, or something like someone else is, or maybe they have to work harder at it or something, you know, and maybe that's why they say that, because they have to pour an excuse on, or something, I don't know. Maybe they are treated fairly. I just think that's kind of sappy.

Int: So it sounds like you're saying that's more of an excuse than a reality?

Catron: Yeah. I think they're treated fair. I think everyone is treated fair.

Int: Well, how about this? On the same questionnaire, the question said,"My teachers like me." 84% of the white kids said, yes. 77% of the black kids said, yes. What do you make of that?

Catron: Mmm. It's not that much of a difference. Maybe they don't. Maybe they act out or something, I don't know. I know some teachers, they don't like me exactly, but...

Int: Was it because of the way you acted?

Catron: Probably, yeah. (Laugh)

Int: How did you act in school?

Catron: Well, I was good in school. I was good.

Int: Did you have a bad attitude?

Catron: Nope. Not then. I think the teachers don't like these people because they don't have a good attitude about school. I mean, I like school a lot. I wouldn't not want to be able to go to school. That doesn't always make me have a good attitude, though.

Int: Do black kids have a different attitude about school?

Catron: Some of them do. Some of them think that "Oh, I have to go here." Of course, I hear a lot of white kids say that too. Everyone thinks that, school, you have to go. So, you can do whatever you want, because you have to go. That's not a very good attitude, though. If I didn't have to go, I'd still go.

It was not only white people who rejected the claims that racial prejudice was behind the stern or critical treatment of black students. Frank, a lanky black boy responded this way to questions about fair treatment and accusations of prejudice in teachers:

Frank: Really, I think everybody's treated fairly, if you ask me, I think they are. But, just the fact of, like, they, from just to be saying it, you know, they don't think they being treated fairly because maybe the white kids, I mean, it just might happen, like if, like if she tell a black kid to stop talking, (it's a white person talking), but she doesn't, you know, doesn't really, can't be, like, they be like, "Well he's talking, why don't you say something to him?" And they don't get in trouble just because she said something to him, it may be like she didn't notice it or something.

Int: So it was that they were treated fairly but they're saying they weren't treated fairly.

Frank: Right. I...well...from what I see.

Int: Yeah, from your particular view point. Everyone's going to see things a little differently. As a black kid, did you feel that you were treated unfairly?

Frank: No.

Int: Or felt that you were treated differently from white kids because of your color?

Frank: No.

Int: You ever hear of people talk about so and so as a teacher is prejudiced?

Frank: Yeah, all the time.

Int: What do they base that on? Why do they say that?

Frank: Um...Usually, people say it, they be in the wrong. Lot of times, from how I see it. Cause it's like a person, like I say, if the teacher told them to be quiet and they know they was talking and then they be like, "I wasn't talking", and so forth, and then they see another kid talking, "Whyn't you tell him to be quiet, or are you just prejudiced?" Like, that's they excuse.

Int: It's just a way to play it off- that they were in the wrong.

Frank: Yeah.

Kevin, a quiet spoken extremely well-rounded black boy - he played on all the school sports teams, performed in the school plays, was an active boy scout, read and acted out adventure books with his friends, and was even on student council - at first contended, also, that there was no racial prejudice in his school:

Int: The way teachers treated kids - now, did different teachers treat kids from different groups differently?

Kevin: Um, not exactly - no, not really

Int: You couldn't really say?

Kevin: It just would, the person, individually, if the person was not that nice of a kid, he might treat them differently, the teacher, he might treat the separate person a different way, but he wouldn't take it out on a certain group.

Int: It would be based on that particular kid.

Kevin: That's right.

Mary provided a similar point of view. She is a very light-skinned Haitian girl, who describes herself as black. Also by her own description, she is shy and introverted. She speaks in a tiny, sing-song voice that contains only the faintest hint that English is not her native language. She is open, insightful and articulate, and not at all reticent. When she speaks of her own painful experiences growing up, she is exciting and eloquent, and speaks freely of her feelings. Her speech is measured. Frequently, there are long pauses during her answers, but then she speaks very rapidly, and usually directly to the point. Academically, she is a superb student according to her grade point average, which is 3.98. I prompted her by saying, "Sometimes, when you talk to kids, they say some teachers were prejudiced." She answered,

Mary: Well, I think that can be their own personal feeling towards a teacher. I mean, if they think a teacher doesn't like them, like gives them bad grades, they'll think it's because they're prejudiced. But they could really deserve the bad grade. I think they would say that because...I think they would say they weren't treated fairly because they expect not to, because in the past...or something. I think it's like a hang up. I think maybe they use it as an excuse. I mean, I think the black kids usually get into more trouble, so they get screamed more at, sometimes, so they would think they're not being treated fairly. I think that's why.

Int: Why do they get in trouble more?

Mary: I...I don't know. In class, I just sit there and observe other people, and I just notice that some of them, they're very rowdy.

Int: You're saying black kids in general are more rowdy than white kids.

Mary: I think some.

Int: Then they would get in trouble more for being rowdy?

Mary: Yeah.

Int: Even with black teachers.

Mary: Yeah.

Int: And then they'd get criticized for it.

Mary: Yeah. And then they'd say, "I didn't do that!" And the teacher would say, "Yes, you did." And so they'd say they were being treated unfairly.

Int: But you're saying it wasn't unfair.

Mary: Right.

In my initial contact with each of the students I was to interview, in which I explained the project and requested their help, I gave them each a letter to their parents, in order to obtain their informed consent to be interviewed (App.B). Sharon, an attractive and energetic black girl, showed a lot of enthusiasm at that meeting. When I happened to bump into her at one of my subsequent visits to the high school, she told me that her father was cool to the idea of her participating. I told her I hoped she could convince him to allow her to do so. She did eventually come in to be interviewed, but was evidently in some conflict about it. Some of that conflict was evident from the beginning of the interview when she asked, in a fairly abrupt fashion, "Yeah, well, what's this all about, anyway?" At the end, she asked that her name not be used, and again asked, "What is this for?" I believe she was more suspicious than curious. During the course of the interview, she was open, friendly, good-humored and extremely informative, yet her body language revealed her mixed feelings about participating in the interview. After about 10 minutes, she began to slowly shift in her chair, until by the end of the session, she had turned so far that her back was to me. In the excerpt below, she indicates that black and white students are treated differently, but, like others above, she seems to see that treatment as justified on the basis of individual behavior. This is contradicted by much of what she will say later. She also suggests that there may be more to the different treatment than she says - "smart remarks" made to black people. This is a more concrete representation of Iris's, "some vague...", which Sharon will speak to in greater depth later.

Sharon: It's just those smart remarks they probably make.
Well, I don't think that's fair, that they wouldn't
say to white people, simply because white people are
never in that situation. There you go! I made it!
(laugh) Usually, me and my friends are in that
situation more than white people, they just kind of
stay out of trouble. Stay low, you know.

Int: Well, then would that be prejudice?

Sharon: No. I wouldn't say it's prejudice. It's just right
from wrong, probably.

Int: Still and all, there's something, and you do feel a
difference.

Sharon: Hmmm. (laugh)

Int: Yeah?

Sharon: No. I don't think there's prejudice. But if there
is, you know, it ain't comin' in my door.

Sarah, on the other hand, was quite convinced that there was no prejudice in her school. She is an exceptionally quiet white girl who was not particularly informative. She gave short, almost curt, answers to many of my questions. However, here she ironically resorts to accusing others of prejudice to explain their contention that it exists, as she responds to the results of my survey question, "Where do you see prejudice?"

Sarah: Well, I just think it's a judgement. I don't think - It just one kid's opinion. I mean it's my opinion that I don't really see it in school.

Int: It sounds like you are saying that you don't see and never saw any evidence of racial prejudice in your education.

Sarah: Right

Int: And, those kids who say they see it, how do you explain that they keep saying that they see it and they feel it?

Sarah: They are probably either with people who are prejudiced or they are prejudiced and don't want to say it.

The next set of comments is based on the students' acknowledgment that prejudice may exist, or that it definitely does exist, corresponding to position a) or b) above. I use the term, acknowledgment, to indicate an apparent degree of reluctance on the part of several informants to report the presence of prejudice. Many of these comments are paired with position e), above, indicating that while the students believe prejudice to exist in their school, they have not seen it.

One such position is articulated by Toni. Toni was scheduled to be interviewed at a time that her teacher would not let her out of class. She had been eager to participate, and stopped into the interview room at two other times during other interviews to see if she could be interviewed. She joined Arden for a joint interview on the last day that I was at the school. She is an extremely pretty black girl who is quite aware of current affairs and issues. Her mother is a teacher who, she tells me, "knows all this stuff about racism and how the kids interact with each other, and how some teachers are prejudiced and stuff like that, but she's not like that." When I asked her about the political history of her family, as I did with each student, she told me that her mother was too young to remember much about the civil rights movement, but that her grandmother remembered it well, and told her about it. When I asked her, "Was there prejudice at your school?" she said, "Not that I was, ...or I didn't catch any, If there was, it wasn't shown towards me, or...I didn't see it shown towards anybody else. But I'm sure it was there."

Holly, a thin blonde girl whose parents, it turned out, are both teachers in the elementary school district, is an athlete who participated in all of her schools's sports programs. She is bouncy and energetic, and was eager to participate in the interviews. She asserted for most of the conversation that she did not believe prejudice to be present in her school. Yet, she, too, conceded (in answering my rather leading question) that there is some prejudice is the schools, but, as in Iris's case, she said she does not look for it.

Int: Then all these questions I've asked you about prejudice, in the overall, it sounds like you're saying you don't see a problem with prejudice in the schools.

Holly: No.

Int: Do you see more or less of it here [at ETHS], or is it about the same?

Holly: It's probably about the same. I don't go out looking for it. I don't think there's a problem.

Again, some students were quite straightforward in their answers. Several students answered more or less as Larry did when asked if they believe any teachers are prejudiced. He simply said, "I believe some are."

Beth, a smiling, energetic, athletic black girl, was quite open in her interview. Yet, she showed the same apparent contradictions in her report as Toni did. When I asked her if she thought any of her teachers were prejudiced, she said, "No, they were pretty good teachers. I wouldn't say they are prejudiced or anything." However, soon afterward, I asked her about the survey in which so many students said that prejudice is everywhere.

Beth: It is everywhere.

Int: OK. Can you explain that?

Beth: I mean, I don't necessarily see it, but I know it's everywhere. I mean, just like how it is in this school. It was probably in the school I went to, but I just didn't see it.

In much the same way, Iris in this excerpt moves from her position that race was not the reason for "unfair" treatment of students. She concedes the possibility that certain teachers were, in fact, prejudiced. I asked her to explain the common response to the survey question, "Where do you see prejudice?"

Iris: I mean I - I mean, there is prejudice. I mean, I am sure there probably was prejudice at our school because I am sure there, I mean, to get, it's not like cause I can - I mean that Norton was not perfect. It was not a great school. I didn't learn anything and I didn't, and so I am sure that there was a teacher - I mean I could probably, if I really thought about it hard, I think that maybe our reading teacher was, because just for the fact that she was.

And later, she does say, "So, I am sure some teachers are prejudiced." However, to her credit, she steadfastly attempts to maintain her reluctance to accuse someone of prejudice. It is implied in much of what she has said in the above excerpt, and is charmingly stated later:

Iris: I could, I mean, I don't want to say that because I don't want people to - because I hate it when people say oh, you know, that you are prejudiced. Because if some guy comes up to me and like,"Oh, let me have your phone number," I am like, "No." "Oh, you are prejudiced, that's it." It couldn't be because I have taste. It just happens to be that I am prejudiced, you know. And that like - that has to be the worst you could ever say to me. That hits a real large nerve in me. So I don't want to say that, you know, you were, she was prejudiced because she was rude to some kids. She might have just as well been but I don't want to point the finger because I don't know.

The next set of comments provide additional testimony to the presence of prejudice in the schools, in the form of excerpts from the interviews which include examples of prejudice, either directly observed by the informant, or in the form of hearsay. In other words, these reports are frequently accompanied by position d), they have seen it. Holly remembered her 8th grade science teacher as a person who did not treat black and white students the same. She was able to recall a situation that bothered her quite a bit:

Holly: ...my science teacher in 8th grade, first quarter, I was friends with him, I was real buddy-buddy with him, and I got an A in his class. And then, 2nd quarter, I didn't like the way he was acting, because he was being real racist about stuff, and he was like, "Oh, you're a black kid," and stuff, and I thought that was really rude, and I wanted to switch out of his class and I let him know that I hated the way that he did jokes like that, and I got a B-. And I thought that it shouldn't affect my grade, because I was doing the same amount of work, and my grades were the same, and I though he wasn't fair that he did that, and that was the only thing I could put it on, was...

Int: So you thought he was treating black kids differently.

Holly: Yeah! He'd be meaner with them.

Int: Can you give me an example?

Holly: Well, one kid, we'd have tables and it'd be two people to a table and he'd usually put a smart white person with a black kid. It's not like he's stupid or anything. But he'd do it like that, and I don't know what he was trying to prove.

Int: What do you think he was trying to do?

Holly: I don't know. I don't know if he was trying to get them to do their work, or, I didn't like the way he was. He'd say jokes and stuff, and....

Int: What kinds of jokes?

Holly: Like racist jokes. I don't remember any. I just didn't like it.

In the next excerpt from the joint interview with Arden and Toni, both girls are able to evoke the flavor of the differential treatment they have experienced, if not details of specific instances. Arden is also black. They know each other from classes at the high school but went to different junior high schools. As an amazing coincidence, each girl happened to have spent her 7th grade year outside of District X as the only black girl in an all-white school - one in Stockton, the other in a small town in Wisconsin.

Int: Now, what about the teachers? Were the teachers, did you ever feel any teachers were prejudiced?

Arden: Yeah. It's like, if the teacher is white, it seems like they favor all the white kids and be mean towards the black kids, or they always get in trouble. Like if a white person does something they really don't do things to them, or like, "don't do it again" or something like that. But a lot of people say that some of the teachers are prejudiced because of the fact that the black person always get in trouble but the white person doesn't.

Int: For doing the same thing?

Arden: Yeah.

Int: Is that your (Toni) experience?

Toni: Well, as far as something like work or something like that, say you took a test and the black child did real bad, and the white child did kind of bad but not as bad as the black child, the teacher would put forth more effort to help the white child. I mean, even, I mean if the black child didn't show as much enthusiasm about getting help, she'd still, I mean, she'd go over it, but she'd do a real rush job, "Well, this what you should have done," and that's it, but towards a white child she'd be more specific and show him how he could better his mistakes and wouldn't make the same ones twice.

Int: Now, you saw that fairly frequently, or...?

Toni: Well, not frequently, but, on occasions I did...Well, sometimes, I haven't had too much experience with fairness, but, I've seen it. I mean, sometimes, the teacher might, say it's because of trouble, you got yourself in trouble you did something and you got caught. If the child had, say the black child had done something before and she'd called them, if the white child did it, it would be like, "Well, you know you shouldn't do that," It'd be like, "blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah." But if the black child does it, its like, well, "you shouldn't do this,"and then she'll send you down to the office, or something like that.

Int: They're treated more severely for the same infractions?

Toni: Yeah, on a stricter basis.

In another example, one can actually see the change in Kevin, as thinking out loud about a former teacher, he reevaluates his experience and comes to a significantly different position from the one he expressed earlier.

Int: Did you hear stories about people being prejudiced?

Kevin: I heard a story about, his name was Mr. D___, and they said he was prejudiced. He was black, and they said he was prejudiced against white kids. And he was of the Southern, country-type. And, I don't feel that, he didn't seem prejudiced. I was in his class. He wasn't prejudiced to me. And the majority of my class was black. But, uh, of the white kids there, he wasn't prejudiced.

Int: Why did they say he was prejudiced? What did they point to as evidence?

Kevin: I guess because his way he gets along with several kids that, you know, like to make jokes about everything. And they would talk about each other in a funny way. Call each others' names. Teachers, playing with each other. Then, they would, after class, they would probably play, but, um, I guess they figure he wouldn't, he didn't, he didn't talk or play with any of the white kids. I guess they figured he was prejudiced in that way.

Int: Can you explain a little bit more about the games they would play?

Kevin: Like, every year he would, at the beginning of the year, he would wear a neck brace. And he said he had a pinched nerve. And a lot of the kids would tease him about that and they'd say, he, they called him "Neck," and stuff like that. So, one day, he had the neck brace off, and a kid ran up to him, ran up behind him, took the neck brace and put it on him. And he was, you know, he was joking around and he called him a tall something, he was really tall..the guy..

Int: Mr. D______?

Kevin: Yeah, uh huh, he called him that, and they were teasing each other, and they were laughing about it and everything, but he didn't get in any trouble for it.

Int: OK

Kevin: But, ah, it seemed like, in a way, it seemed like he was prejudiced. Like, if a white kid was to, uh, to say anything, he'd tell him to be quiet, but if a black kid would say anything, it wouldn't be that sudden, he wouldn't tell him to be quiet. He would mess with him, call him a name or something, you know, play with him, and then tell him to be quiet. But he was, I mean one time I was sitting down reading my book and they were discussing and I was trying to read on what they were discussing and I was sitting there and he called out my name and he said, 'H______, what's wrong with you?" - he called me by my last name, H______, and I said, "Nothing, Mr. D_____." You know, he kind of singled me out like that and he also, that's when I was born in the South, I was from Georgia, and he, um, he said he can tell I was from Georgia because of my belly and my feet.

Int: What does that mean?

Kevin: I don't know. And he said, you know my feet were big and everything, and he could tell that I was from the South. And, you know, he, that was a funny way, he was just playing with me. But he just wouldn't play with the white kids that way. I guess people figured he was prejudiced in that way. But it wasn't no problem with the grades or anything. The grade was even. You got what you deserved.

Int: So, if there was prejudice, it wasn't in your grades, it was, maybe, in the way you got along with him?

Kevin: Yes, mm hmm.

In an earlier extract, Sharon had alluded to the "smart remarks" teachers make. In the excerpt below, she and I struggle to clarify what she means by that phrase, as that appears to be at the core of what she furnishes as examples and evidence for her contention that some teachers are prejudiced.

Sharon: Well, what I put, [when filling out the District X survey,] I put my teachers treat me fairly. I probably put in between, an in-between answer. Because, it's like, the little things you do, most of the teachers - white - they don't like it. Just the little things you do, they don't like it. You have your different ways, than other kids. And they be like, "Well, that's not fair."

Int: What about the teachers? What are some of the little things you catch from teachers?

Sharon: Ok. It'd be like turning in your homework. Some teachers make little smart comments but that'd be toward everybody. Cause I know, there's this one girl, and she's not my color, and she just would not do any homework at all, and the little teachers make their little comments, but usually, it'd just be real vulgar and like, "Well, you're going to be here next year," and "You're not doing anything," and "You guys, you really need to study more on your test," and "I don't like your attitude," and "You always trying to talk," and all this other stuff like that. Little things. But like I said, don't bother me.

Int: They don't treat white kids that way?

Sharon: No. Not all the white kids.

Int: But I guess what I'm trying to pin you down is, do you see, were black kids treated differently from white kids?

Sharon: Well, it's just...No. It's just the little things that go on. It's not, I don't take offense to it. It's just, I don't take offense to it.

Int: I hear you say you don't take offense to it; it's the little things; but I can't quite tell what those little things are. Is there a difference? Or, let me ask you this - help me understand the difference. I know you're picking something up, Ok, there's something there.

Sharon: Between the teachers and the students?

Int: Yeah.

Sharon: Eeeeeah! There is a difference....Ok, like a certain teacher would always ask questions - say it was a foreign language class, and she would give, this certain teacher always talks in Spanish. And you don't understand what she's saying and she's always talking real fast - she asks you a question - she asks a certain person a question. They answer it real quickly. They ask me a question, and like, "Wait a minute, repeat that." Ok, and ask again, like "What are you trying to say," and then, it'd be like a cut-off real quick and ask someone else. Say that would be like, "Why is she always doing that, man she's prejudiced," and I heard that a lot of times in our class.

Int: Ok. How do we know that's prejudice, and not like you said before, maybe just you deal with kids of different abilities differently.

Sharon: Because if, like, you don't understand something, the teacher should be willing - I mean they might be in a bad mood , but they should be willing to help you. I mean, if you don't understand, what is "cuando", you know, it's "when", but other kids might know, "Well, I know what that is," teacher should be willing to help you. Ours was just like, "Well, forget her - she don't know what she doing. Let me cut and go to a Jen-i-fer", or a, you know, someone like that.

Int: Mm Hmm. How do we know the difference between being prejudiced against somebody who's of low ability, and prejudiced against somebody who's Black? In other words, would she treat someone else who didn't know the answer the same way, if they were white?

Sharon: You probably have to go ask her. I really don't know.

Int: That's what I'm trying to separate out. See, when you say someone's prejudiced and they treat a kid that way, I understand what you're saying - it's not a good way to treat someone. But is it racial prejudice? How do you know it's racial prejudice, instead of...the way she treats kids who don't know the answer?

Sharon: It's probably the little smart comments a teacher would make if you don't answer the question. If not, it's like, "Well, you don't know it so I'm going on to another person."

It appears that Sharon is sensitive to a different attitude toward black and white students on the part of some teachers. This is shown to Sharon in the form of a different style of speaking to black and white students in similar situations.

In this preceding section, we have seen interview excerpts in which students report on the absence and the presence of teacher prejudice. In the first set, students reported that they do not think that teachers are prejudiced and could not provide examples of teacher prejudice. In the second set, students reported that prejudice may or does exist. In some cases, students were also able to provide evidence that supported those opinions.

The concept of prejudice

The second main topic area into which the student reports fall is that of the concept of prejudice, itself. Imbedded in these excerpts we find the meaning of the term, prejudice, as it is construed and defined by the students, either formally and directly, or by inference. Clearly, the preceding section tells a good bit about the students' way of defining this term. The following comments tend to be more focused on the concepts. In addition, in some places, we find discussion of the justification or rationalization for prejudice. Also, some of these comments indicate explicitly or implicitly a value judgement made of a prejudiced person or of prejudiced acts. These three subsets - definitions, explanations, and judgements - are frequently found intermingled in these comments, and it is difficult, if not impossible, to separate this blend. These next excerpts entail discourse on all three, as they are found enmeshed in the students' comments.

In the next two excerpts, Kevin and Holly define prejudice. Kevin defines prejudice rather amorphously as "singling out", but his are typical of the comments that the students made. Then, more specifically, he defines it as "saying something rude." Holly tries to describe what she calls "attitude." She is not particularly successful, but, again, she speaks for several of the students who found it difficult to put it into words. She refers, it would appear to the same essential phenomenon as Iris's "some vague..." and Sharon's "little things."

Kevin: No, and they weren't prejudiced to any white kids at all. We had one teacher - his name was Mr. C_____. And we had another black kid, his name was Bruce D________. And they, um, he was from St. Nick's, and they knew each other, and he'd like to tease him. 'Oh, you're from St. Nick's,'and so on and so on. But that was the only thing that was close to singling out in any type of way.

Int: Oh, because the kid that was from St. Nick's was white?

Kevin: No, he was black.

Int: Oh. OK. But that's the only type of singling out anybody did? ok.

Kevin: Mm hmm

Int: Ok. How would a teacher act if they were racially prejudiced? I mean, how would you know a teacher was prejudiced?

Kevin: Um... I really don't know. I don't think they would probably show it.

Int: Why not?

Kevin: I'm not sure. First of all, they wouldn't want any kids spreading any rumors, to cause him to lose his job or anything like that. And, I guess they don't want to start nothing in the school, type of situation.

Int: Ok. Now, does that...show prejudice?

Kevin: Naw. Not prejudice. I guess they don't say anything rude to anybody else. I guess they just don't try to talk to anybody else.

. . .

Int: So how would you know, then, if a teacher is prejudiced?

Holly: Their attitude in class, just how they would call on people. But I... I don't know...like...If someone says an answer to the question, and she'll call on someone and she'll cut it apart, and say, "Oh, no, that's wrong," and then someone else will say basically the same thing, and she'll go, "Oh, yeah, ok, I see what you're saying now."

Holly seems here to be commenting on a situation which is very similar to the one Sharon told about her Spanish class. In that case, the teacher was talking to a black student who did not know the answer and thought to herself (according to Sharon) "Let me cut and go to a Jen-i-fer." They appear to refer to a very similar phenomenon.

In this three-way exchange, Arden and Toni and I discuss the origins of prejudice as a response to newness or differences.

Arden: Most people. But, it's weird because some black people have white friends, but the people who are not their friends, that's the people they're prejudiced against. Like, say she was white, and me and her were good friends, and another white person comes that I don't know, or don't like, that's the people that usually get prejudiced against. I don't know why.

Int: The new girl would be prejudiced against you?

Toni: No, Arden would be prejudiced against her, because she didn't know who she was.

Int: Even though you two were friends.

Both: Right, yeah.

Int: First impressions...

Toni: Something like that, yeah.

Arden: Yeah, sometimes white people...

Toni: I mean, yeah, you might have run across a bad part of them, they'll be like, pffft. Or, they might do something that you really just don't like, and then you'll be like, "Who is she supposed to be, coming over here?"

This was followed by some conversation on the humor in white kids "trying to act black," when they are around black kids, which led naturally enough to discussion of how the environment influences behavior, and how the girls behaved and felt as the only black girls in all-white schools.

Toni: Yeah. It was a big change for 7th grade, too, because the school that I went to for 7th grade, I was the only black girl in the whole school.

Int: That happened to you (A) too?

Arden: When I was living in Wisconsin, I was living in Stoughton...

Int: What was that like, being the only black kid in an all white school?

Toni: It was like, well, pretty much everybody liked me there, they thought it was a good experience.

Arden: Yeah. And sometimes it seem like you're white when you get around them.

Toni: Yeah, you grow to act like them, in some ways.

Arden: Yeah.

Int: What did they say to you? Did they say, "You're not so bad for a black person," or did they just realize that you were just a person?

Toni: They just took me as a regular person. They didn't mind.

Arden: Yeah, I had a lot of friends.

Int: Did you think that they were going to be more prejudiced than they were?

Toni: At first, I did, but then I realized that they didn't really care, "Well she's black so she can't...or she can, or she shouldn't"

Int: So it was weird at first but,

Toni: Yeah, like the first day or so, but then everybody became really friendly towards me, they were willing to cooperate, I guess. (Laughter).

Int: Arden, did you have the same kind of experience. It was real strange or uncomfortable at first?

Arden: Yes. After a while, I guess you could say that they would cooperate. But sometimes it seems like it's an all white school and it seems like they're scared of you for some reason. It seemed like you could be bossy to them if you want to.

Toni: Yeah, it's kind of like you get them in check.

Int: Did you take advantage of that sometimes?

Toni: No, not really. There really wasn't too much of a need.

Arden: I wouldn't have wanted them to go around behind my back, "She think she's..."

Toni: Yeah, "Just cause she's black, she thinks she can push us around." You'd have all them against you, it'd be, Oh, boy.

Int: So you're better off just being yourself.

Toni: Right.

In most instances, as discussed above, students said that they did not see prejudice in their schools. Here, Larry comes back to that issue and begins to get at some of the reasons for it.

Larry: Well, they are sometimes- probably they are treated unfairly and I just can't see it because I mean it is hard for me to say whether they are being treated fairly or not because I am not in their shoes so...

Int: You don't recognize unfair treatment?

Larry: I...I...it would be...a bit harder. I mean I just don't really, I, I... But it would be real hard for me to really see whether or not, unless I heard them saying I am being treated unfairly. Then if I could go back and with certain people I could go back and look and just think about it and I could try to remember it. Then I could say well maybe they are. Maybe they are right.

Int: How do you explain the fact that you don't remember or ever seeing any of that?

Larry: You'll see it sometimes, but I mean you, sometimes it's accumulative and small things and, hey, its not me. At the time it just is not important.

Int: You might see it and then forget about it right away?

Larry: Well, shake it off after awhile. You might not just think about it again for awhile.

Int: Because you don't really feel it.

Larry: If I experience some unfairness I mean you bet I'd start an uproar real quick.

Int: It stays with you longer.

Interestingly enough, Larry, who appears to be quite astute, politically, has just presented himself in the same unflattering light ("Hey, it's not me") that just minutes before he had shed on part of the white Edwinton community in this exchange:

Int: Do you think anybody in the white community would be concerned about teachers being prejudiced?

Larry: Well, the problem is there aren't a whole lot of black teachers in Edwinton.

Int: Anybody in the white community who would be concerned about white teachers being prejudiced against black kids?

Larry: I wouldn't be concerned. I mean there are some families - some teachers - some people would just pass it off as,"Oh, they are just getting hyper." They don't want to do anything about it.

Int: So when you say the school district would act out of fear of alienating the community, you are talking about alienating the black community?

Larry: Alienating the black community in some parts of the way .. I don't think a lot - I mean even though there is not much racism in Edwinton, I mean there aren't a whole lot of people in [predominantly white] northwest Edwinton that are going to stand up and boycott the school and take a leave from their lawyer's job to just to go on a march around the school or Dist. X office complaining about these teachers.

Int: Their commitment is not to social justice?

Larry: They might agree - some people might also agree with it but I don't think that they would come out in force to try to have justice be served.

Int: But if it were a white community and white kids that were the subject of black prejudice, do you think they might?

Larry: Oh, yeah. They would be out there in a second.

He may be correct in his indictment of the residents of northwest Edwinton, but by his comments, he places himself among them. Later, he develops the idea that some people tend to notice prejudice more than others in this exchange:

Int: So I guess that my question was that if there is unfair treatment one of the reasons that it is reported and that you didn't notice it was that you didn't feel it directed at you and so it didn't stay with you if you noticed it. Do I understand you ..

Larry: OK, it some, some, sometimes their parents may tell them so and they might take things - certain black kids might take a little too seriously, sometimes. I mean, since because their parents might have warned them to look out for some things, like they have always heard about their parents true life experiences with racism and they might feel it to a little less degree - a lot less degree or something like that, and they might just say well, "Hey, this is just like it was back in the 60's," and so on and so on. And, they are really looking out for it cause they know what to look for because their parents had told what has happened to them and they know what it is and they are looking out for it. And since my parents don't have any stories about experiencing racism to tell me, and I don't think I have experienced racism towards me - just me - sometimes like in sports sometimes. Like, if I ever tried to going over to Mason Park to play basketball, I'd get kicked out.

Int: Oh you do.

Larry: Oh, yeah. But I mean I wouldn't get kicked out. I just wouldn't be picked on a team and I would sit there all day and get ready to go in and never go in. But, so I just - it just would be hard - if they know what to expect and know what to feel and know what it is. It would be easier to see.

Int: They are more sensitive to it?

Larry: Right. Oh, yeah. More sensitive, that's the word - I just wasted five minutes trying to say it.

Catron's comments here show a softening of her earlier position and indicate a measure of understanding of some of the issues related to racial and ethnic integration. She covers a few salient points in her remarks. First, she appears to understand the sense of isolation felt by minority group members. Second, in finally acknowledging that there is racism, she describes it as "fine," a good term to describe the subtle "little things". Third, while she concedes that there are significant social and power issues attached to it, she contends, in effect, that it is not her problem.

Int: How did they get the Latino kids involved? You said that was a kind of a separate group. The Hispanic kids.

Catron: I know them from my classes. I know one, she's really quiet, and I know one, she's really outspoken, but I've never really done anything with any of them, because they have their own group. They have their own club. They have their own ...I don't know. I can see why, because that's their culture, and we do that, too, I think, we tend to...I mean, if I was to move to France, I think that there would be a group of American kids, and I'd cling more to American kids than French. So, I can understand where they're coming from.

Int: You wouldn't advocate here having a white kids club?

Catron: I don't think there's any need. I mean, I think it was good for them, to do that, because I'm sure it was hard for them, but I don't see any need for that.

Int: One thing that I wonder is, is if you could define what prejudice means. In your view what would you say prejudice is, then?

Catron: Well, when a person or a group is going against someone for their color or religion or their beliefs, for no particular reason. Just not liking them. Treating them different from everybody else. I see racism here, but not as much as there used to be, I don't think. So I don't think I'd be able to notice it if I saw it. I could, if there was some big thing, but it's so fine that there's not, I don't, I mean I do but I don't. But then again, I'm on the other side of it because I guess if I was black and there was racism against me, then I guess I'd say there was. So, from my viewpoint I can't see it, but I'm sure there is. I'm sure it's there.

Int: Do you think you benefit from it?

Catron: Oh, yeah, I'm sure it's there. I know it's there, but I don't think I could really point it out to you.

Int: It's very subtle.

Catron: To me. But, that's just because I, myself, am not prejudiced in any way at all. I guess, it's hard for me to see that, because I don't believe in that.

Int: Do you think you benefit from it, if there is prejudice against blacks, let's say, do you think white people benefit from it?

Catron: No. I mean, they get more power, but I don't think that's right at all.

Int: You think they do get more power.

Catron: Yeah. They had more than blacks, but I don't think that was right.

Int: You think society is making any progress about prejudice?

Catron: Yeah, they have, in the past, with Martin Luther King, or whatever. I think they've done pretty good.

Int: Do you see it as a problem in society?

Catron: I'd rather tackle one of the other problems. There's a lot of problems. Abortion. Freedom is a big thing, but I don't think it's a problem, as serious a problem as it was before. I think it's a problem, but I don't think it's as big as it was before.

Rudolfo was one of the most personable and enlightened interviewees. Although he was born in Brazil, Rudolfo "looks white" and "sounds white." He is light skinned, and there is only a slight hint in his speech that his first language was Portuguese. He has been in the states only five or six years. Indeed, he was one of the most thoughtful and articulate of the students interviewed. He attended a virtually all-white parochial school in 6th, 7th, and 8th grades. Because of this, some of his experience can not be directly compared with the others in this study. On the other hand, his thoughts on the nature of prejudice are extremely relevant. A great deal of his conversation is reproduced here, although his conversation rambles some and unfolds on the spot, of course. It touches on his definition of prejudice, his views on how prejudice is expressed, and many aspects of the larger concept of prejudice. Included also, are his thoughts on the causes of prejudice, as well as its effects on the victims. He experienced being the object of prejudice, himself, not because of skin color, but because of his language. In some ways, he condenses and synthesizes the comments of the other students interviewed. In other ways, he evinces a maturity, understanding, and broad perspective that is not seen in any other interviews in this study.

Rudolfo: Adults don't want to show they are prejudiced...if they get caught, they would lose their jobs. On the other hand, you can see it in kids, their attitudes.

Rudolfo: Yeah, you can kind of tell sometimes, like I would give an example here. You kind of can tell by like gangs and stuff.

Int: How is that?

Rudolfo: Well if you look at gangs they are either one thing or the other and there are very few people that are different.

Int: The gangs are not integrated?

Rudolfo: No, not at all. So they have like maybe one or two members of a different race or type of person.

Int: Is that a type of prejudice?

Rudolfo: Yeah, in a way, cause if you have a Latino gang and a black gang, you could easily if they weren't so prejudiced, you easily could have two mixed gangs because they are basically doing the same stuff.

Int: Which is?

Rudolfo: Causing trouble. But, they just don't mix. Its really -

Int: How do you explain that? That's prejudice?

Rudolfo: Well, in a way, I don't know. Its kind of, I think it kind of been led by their parents sort of. Their parents institute that attitude on them and if not their parents its somebody they respect. Maybe their friends in this case, but it is impressed on them because they don't know that yet. If you think about it, they don't know if Latinos are worse than regular white people or whatever. Cause they haven't experienced that much yet. Because it - Well, they kind of see what the world is doing and you can see racial problems and stuff. They kind of follow that cause they kind of see well maybe there is a difference. Why are they different, you know. There must be something bad to do with that.

Int: In other words you are saying that people are not naturally prejudiced. They learn it somehow.

Rudolfo: Yeah, they acquire it - the prejudice.

Int: OK. And, here an example of it might be the fact that two gangs who did the same things together or separately raise hell won't join up together.

Rudolfo: Right.

Int: Because of the difference in maybe their skins and their ethnic...

Rudolfo: Right.

Int: You are kind of smiling at that. It seems kind of stupid to you I guess.

Rudolfo: No. Its kind of - I don't know - Its kind of an interesting subject. Yeah . Cause I kind of of felt a little bit of prejudice when I first came here because I came here in the fourth grade. And fourth grade kids don't tend to be so nice especially to people they don't know, and they're kind of really different. And I didn't know the languages and they made jokes about me and stuff like that. And I punched some people out for awhile and they kind of - I don't know - let it go for awhile.

Int: So you were the victim of prejudice?

Rudolfo: Yeah, when I first came here. Now it's no problem.

Here, Rudolfo discussed the difficulty of being a stranger who could not explain himself, and went on to describe the little preparation his parents gave him. Then I asked him to discuss the long term effects of being treated as a minority.

Rudolfo: Well, I got a little bit shyer and I also, I mean, I could ignore insults like they were nothing now. You can insult me all you want. It doesn't matter to me anymore. I kind of learned to deal with that cause I know who I am. You don't know who I am, see, so why are you saying these things to me you don't even know....I kind of - that kind of helped me to be nicer to minorities, actually, because of the kind of, you know, I can kind of understand where they are coming from.

Int: OK.

Rudolfo: Prejudice has kind of played with my character for awhile.

Int: Do you think that makes you more tolerant of different people or...

Rudolfo: Oh, Yeah

Int: ...understanding of different people?

Rudolfo: Yeah, it makes me - It makes it easier for me to relate to minorities and stuff.

. . .

He then describes the students at his parochial school, and contends that they are some how better - more cultured - and therefore, in his view, less likely to be prejudiced.

Int: So then, you are now saying that in a parochial school since it is a tuition place and the parents have a certain amount of money, then the kids are a different quality somehow.

Rudolfo: Right, see because sometimes, poor people - the poorer peop - the poor kids, they sometimes have to be in the streets for awhile because, you know, whatever, their parents aren't home and they are working and stuff and they have a little bit more freedom and they get a little bit - how would I say this - a little bit bad? But, so that kind of dims their mind. They have more of a closed mind sort of because of that because they kind of feel - well, they kind of feel rejected in a way, I think, because their parents aren't with them and they have all these problems and stuff. So that, that kind of closes their mind a little bit and they don't pick up on not being prejudiced as quick.

Int: Well, this is real interesting stuff and I am really happy you were able to stop in and give me this good interesting material. Now, when I go back over this - well, let me before I ask you that - let me just ask you since I said my interest is in interactions between teachers and kids and stuff and particularly about prejudice and so forth, is there anything that maybe you would want to say - anything you want to add to your conversation here that describes what you see as far as interactions?

Rudolfo: I don't know. I think that adults tends to be more prejudiced than kids but they don't show it as much. So it kind of counteracts - so it kind of - I don't know - kind of blanks it out - neutralizes it. Ok. So they - I don't know - they have too much fake for me.

Int: OK. How are you going to keep that from happening to you when you get a little older?

Rudolfo: I don't know. I'll have to burn that bridge when I come to it.

Int: OK

Rudolfo: I think I can do that without, I mean, you just have to be truthful about what you think and what you say what your feelings are. Generally, I am not a prejudiced person so I don't think I will have any problem with that.

Int: Would you say that you have prejudices against adults?

Rudolfo: Ah, (laughs), No, cause I can understand where they are coming from. Well, if you look at how many people are prejudiced you can understand - there must be something, you know, that is setting them all off - So there is some sort of - I am going to say a reason - but, a reason for them being that way, you know, not a reason to be prejudiced, but a reason why they are prejudiced. Its kind of - I don't know - I think the earlier people were really prejudiced and it has kind of gradually getting out of that. So the world is kind of backing out of being prejudiced and it's taking a pretty long time but we are pretty much doing it.

Int: Now you are saying there was a good reason at one point to be prejudiced?

Rudolfo: Well since they didn't know each other at all and they couldn't communicate when they first met, it is understandable that they be prejudiced. See, it like they come like, say, the Portuguese, they came to Brazil, right. They don't have any idea how to communicate with these Indians and stuff. Of course, they are going to be prejudiced because they are so different and they are so peculiar. It is kind of natural to fear the unknown. So in way prejudice is more of a fear than anything else.

Int: OK But, then once you become knowledgeable and understanding, you have something to relate to -

Rudolfo: Right

Int: Then you don't have that reason anymore?

Rudolfo: Nope.

Int: But those prejudices get passed on anyway?

Rudolfo: Right.

Int: So that's your theory, kind of, of prejudice, in a way isn't it?

Rudolfo: So I think prejudice is ignorance actually.

. . .

Then, at the end of the interview, this exchange occurred:

Rudolfo: You were kind of surprised when I said that people were kind of prejudiced against me.

Int: I was surprised?

Rudolfo: Yeah, you kind of looked like, Ahh, some material here! (laughter)

Int: You know, maybe I felt that way. It struck me I guess as kind of insightful because you were talking of when you were in the fourth grade. It is interesting that you can look back on it and use that kind of terminology for it, I guess, and that is what I was thinking. But that's your great insight, I think.

Rudolfo: OK.

Int: Did you feel it as prejudice at that time? Would you have called it that?

Rudolfo: I don't think I knew prejudice that well when I first got here. But I knew I was being left out. I just didn't know the word to it, but like I knew what was going on.

Int: You felt it but didn't know what to call it?

Rudolfo: Right. It doesn't matter what you call it even if you don't know the word. It's like it is still there. (A bell began ringing) Do you need anything else?

Int: No. Thanks a million.

Rudolfo: Take care.

Int: Will you make it to your class on time?

Rudolfo: Yes. Now you have gotten me all wired up and I will be talking for the next three hours.

Int: Is that right?

Rudolfo: In a way it is good because it will raise my participation a little.

By way of reinforcing Rudolfo's comments on the "stupidity" of prejudice, it would be useful to return to some of Iris's rather uninhibited conversation.

Iris: It's not - I don't even know. I can't get the words to say that it didn't...it...maybe for just for me it doesn't matter. It still doesn't matter. It didn't matter. It doesn't matter. It never mattered to me what color you are. I mean to think, to think that, you know, that you have to pick your friends on the basis of that. Because it's not like - oh, the color of your skin determines whether you are nice or not, or whether you have a good personality or whether you make someone laugh. So, and I am sure that some teachers are prejudiced, which is just stupid. And you can't be a teacher. How can you choose that profession and be a teacher when you can't even get along with people of another race or another religion? You know, that's, that's crazy. But obviously, you know, they can't come to the grips. I guess everyone has some prejudice in

> them of some kind. I am prejudiced against ignorant people. I know that. I already know that - people that are ignorant and just - I can't handle that, and I realize that because my mom has pointed this out to me many times. If you are ignorant, I, you know, I have very little patience. So maybe there was prejudice of some kind but I couldn't see it. You know. It was not as severe. It wasn't like - It wasn't as I said before you know "You, nigger" or "You, spick" or "You honky" or that "You can't be in my class," or "You are stupid, get out. Your mom must not have taught you," or you know, it wasn't like that. It might have been - It may have been when I wasn't there, or maybe I wasn't paying attention because I was wrapped in my own life to be worrying about you know whether there was prejudice in the school. But it was not as, as strong - it wasn't as severe as you would see in those teeny-bopper movies about how there is prejudice and how, you know, those after school specials.

Finally, in explaining the findings of the survey on the presence of prejudice, Frank, at the close of his interview poignantly attempts to make sense of the results:

Frank: Um. In schools. Just black and white. Um... like if it's two black kids and the black kid tells him to shut up or something, and then it wouldn't be that bad, but, see, like if a white person told him to shut up and then, you know, it'd be like, "Why you telling...you don't be telling me to shut up!" It's just from all, coming back from history and you know, how like how the blacks was treated, and the blacks still have some of that, I guess, anger in their heart, or whatever. And that's just the way sometimes they feel, or whatever. ...And then, like...Hard to explain.

Int: So, maybe you're saying that you don't think there's real prejudice, but sometimes the actions come out...in a way that looks prejudiced or seems prejudiced?

Frank: Right.

Int: Is that what you're saying? I mean, I don't want to mis...or maybe there is prejudice?

Frank: Well, there is prejudice, yeah. But...[very quietly]...I...don't know.

Int: It's hard to talk about, isn't it?

Frank: Yes.

The semblance of prejudice

One may gain some measure of understanding of the students' perspective on racial matters by examining their interactions with each other. One of the most productive approaches for this was to ask the students to discuss an experience common to every one of them - the lunch room. Lunch appears to be the most segregated activity in the course of the day. Students were asked to explain the seating patterns in the lunch room. The stretches of conversation on that topic provides some of the most important material for analysis. In them, the students indicate their thoughts and feelings about the importance of race - particularly as it pertains to friendship and socialization. Additional responses were obtained by asking students to discuss the racial climate of their schools. And frequently, they were simply asked, how did black and white kids get along? As in the above sections on the presence of prejudice and on the concept of prejudice, not all interview material is included. These excerpts are some of the most illustrative.

Int: How did the kids get along in your school?

Donald: They got along good. I mean there wasn't like racial discrimination against kids up there. So we got along pretty good

. . .

Int: OK. Now, your school that you went to, there were a lot of different kinds of kids. Lot of kids from different ethnic backgrounds and so forth. How did they all get along?

Catron: Well, we, see we didn't, they were in our classes and everything, and I was friends with some of them, I mean I was acquaintances with some of them, but some of them, they think that they like, maybe the Hispanic people, you know they have a Hispanic club, so they tend to cling together. And they don't spread out that much. It's still like that here. They group together. So, it's kind of hard to get to know them. As far as black and whites were concerned, there was no difference. We were all friends. And we really didn't see any differences between that.

. . .

Int: What about the racial climate in your school? How would you describe it? Was it ..

Larry: Well, it was just amiable. It wasn't tense. Everyone just got along.

. . .

Int: Now, you were saying that there tend to be black groups and white groups and mixed groups in your school, and you said that you were in all of those groups, and you went where your friends were, is that right?

Toni: Yeah.

Int: Can you talk about that?

Toni: Like she said, there were mixed groups and one black group and one white group, but I mean, pretty much people mixed in together. It wasn't no racial thing. Wasn't like "Well, you cant hang with us because you're black or because you're white." It really didn't matter that much.

. . .

Int: That's great. Um, I'm interested, as I said, in these interactions of people, and one of the things that's always interesting to me is groups, how kids wind up...there's various groups in a school, usually. What can you tell me about the different groups at, uh, your junior high?

Kevin: Um, we had the athletic group. Um, the academic group. Then we had the people who were academic and athletic. Then we had people who, um, liked to chase girls, and everything, and really, everybody was really together. It wasn't no group where it was just white and black. There were some, but, um, mostly everything was together, mixed.

. . .

Int: Tell me about the different groups, what kind of groups did you have? Can you say something about each different kind of group?

Sharon: Well, it depends on what you wanted to do. Like, in the field, if you wanted to play rope, your certain kind of group. Usually, some of my friends would want to play rope, like double-dutch, you'd be like on the pavement. Then, if you wanted to play, you know, the long pole with the string and a ball, hit that around...

Int: Tetherball?

Sharon: Yeah, usually, like nerds would play that. Not mean or anything, I didn't know how to play it or anything, so I wouldn't be interested in it. If you wanted to play 4-square, there'd be a certain square where everybody usually plays, and if you wanted to be out in the field, well, you could just sit down, and do your homework or just, you know, play baseball or softball, usually. Anything you wanted to do, you had your little groups.

. . .

Kevin: ...like in the lunchroom, we have a, I look at it and it's tables whereas generally its within the same area it's basically all black kids sitting there, like the athletes, the football players and all of us are there, and um, right across from us there's a group of girls, white girls there, and then towards the, that's the second row, and in the third row, we have an integrated black and white kids sitting area, and way on the other side we have the black girls that sit there and toward the back its black girls and boys, over toward the windows. See, you can pick it out pretty easy. Everything is of its own mix. Of his own people.

Int: Ok. Now, does that...show prejudice?

Kevin: Naw. Not prejudice. I guess they don't say anything rude to anybody else. I guess they just don't try to talk to anybody else.

Int: Why do you suppose people do that? It seems like in all the cafeterias, that's almost always the case. It was probably that way when you were at Casey.

Kevin: Sort of, yeah. Let's see. Um, it was like that. People sat in their own groups. Where I sat at, there was, we were all white and black, in sitting there, 'cause we all played football and everything.

Int: So, what pulled you together was your interest in football.

Kevin: Football and athletics.

Int: Athletics. OK. So color was not so significant. Um, what about the tables that are all white or all black. Does that mean that color is more important to those kids?

Kevin: Um, it seems like it, but I don't know if they take it that way. They probably just figure, um, well, they probably just figure...I guess they don't...maybe they don't feel that they'll be accepted. I'm not sure. Um, I don't know if they figure that way, though.

Int: Ok. So, they might be afraid someone's prejudiced against them in a way...

Kevin: Probably, mm hmm.

Int: ...Kind of a way to defend yourself against it.

Kevin: Probably, mm hmm.

. . .

Int: Ok. Now, one thing I've noticed in the lunchrooms is that almost always the same kids sit at the same tables. You have a kind of group of kids at different tables. And very frequently at the middle schools, and even here at the high school, I notice you've got black tables, you've got white tables. Then, you've got mixed tables. Was it that way at Hiller?

Frank : Yeah, it was.

Int: Now, why is that? I mean, what's your, how do you analyze that? Is it prejudice? That people sit that way?

Frank: Um, I don't think so. It's just the fact that, usually you like the people that's in your neighborhood, you know, to who you're good friends with, and with the fact of, like, the blacks who live in this neighborhood...and others, you know. And that's just basically how I see it. You know, it wasn't really that we didn't like them or they didn't like us. Everybody got along fine.

. . .

Int: Did the tables, were the tables black tables, white tables, and integrated tables?

Catron: I guess you could say that, but we were friends with them, so it's not like... You still see that here, but not as much, it's just that I think that they've grown up with all of those people, it's like their culture, you know, and we've all grown up with the same people, but if I'd wanted to, I could have gone, too, so, it's not like, the guys, the guys are different. They sat with each other, but for some reason, the girls I don't know, I guess we cling. Cause two new people came to our school, and they sat with the other guys, and sometimes we sat with them.

. . .

Int: One of the things I've noticed at the schools is that at lunch, the tables are frequently black tables and white tables. How did they sit at your school?

Holly: It was separate like that. The popular girls - snobby - have one table, and then, my friends were usually at two different tables and I'd switch off. And the guys would all sit together. It would be like, it was separate from black guys and white guys, and they'd have separate tables like the girls would.

Int: How do you explain the fact that in the classes kids are mixed but at lunch they sit separate?

Holly: I don't know. I just don't like it when people do that. It makes me think they have something against them. And, I don't care what color anyone is. It's stupid. I don't know. I'd sit all over the lunch room. I wouldn't sit with the popular kids. I sort of had something against my friends in 5th grade who just went off. They kind of left me. And I was like, "ok." But I wasn't like, "I'm gonna get you," - it really didn't matter.

Int: Well, then do you think that the kids who sit separately are doing it because of prejudice?

Holly: I think people sit with their friends that they've had. And then, when they get used to it, because it never changed, and the same people sat at the same tables 6th through 8th grade. So I don't know how to explain it.

. . .

Larry: That too. Them especially - it was the middle table - at the top sat - so called popular girls. And then down here sat the second table sat the medium girls and the bottom sat the girls on the lowest rung. It went on like that and that's how it went. And if you went to sit at another table they would ask why are you sitting here?

Int: That's the girls?

Larry: That's how the girls were arranged. And if a girl sat up higher, it was like a shock ran through the lunchroom. Look at her look where she is sitting. I mean, my best friends came- I went to Orrington they came and they all sat down and they weren't very athletic and they played chess and I like to play chess and they are my friends and I sat there. But people that played sports and the people that I had in all my classes sat up there, so after a while I switched over there. And one of the obnoxious kids said that. I was just, "Shut up!"

Int: What did he say?

Larry: Why are you sitting here? Why don't you go sit back with the losers? I didn't take too kindly to that either because they were my friends.

Int: Right. All right. So there is a pretty clear cut social division there?

Larry: That's what I thought.

Int: Ok, what about black and white. Were those divisions also clear cut?

Larry: Well, not very. There's a small group of kids they lived basically around each other - about ten with five whites and five blacks. Everyone was friendly with each other but I mean you just wouldn't call that person a good friend and you wouldn't go sit with them and if you were doing a project you wouldn't want to do it with that person.

. . .

One extensive interview excerpt gives powerful support to an issue raised in Larry's comments - that there is a great amount of pressure felt by students to conform with the "popular" norms. In great measure, this conformity is evinced in a common clothing and grooming style. The "popular" group dresses very much alike, and members are frequently identified by their trappings. In the moving passage that follows, Mary discusses her break from the typical allegiance to these norms and their attendant pressures.

Mary: 6th grade was miserable. In 6th grade and 7th grade, I was just like the others. I was just coming to middle school and so I was really more worried about my looks and stuff like that. Now, I think that was so stupid, I can't stand it. My mom thinks I'm crazy, but I just don't care how I look now, at all. [Mary is cute, neatly groomed, and nicely dressed.] It just wasn't worth it. It wasn't worth it at all. In 8th grade, I was a, what, nonconformist? I really liked that, nonconformist. In 6th grade and 7th grade, everyone was like that - conformist. In 8th grade, I put all my concentration doing my homework, doing things that made me happy, not others. And so I felt very free, natural, and everyone else - they didn't seem to mind. Everyone was nice to me. They seemed to respect me, and so I really liked to be free. I think the harder you try to please others, the harder it is. I mean, just be yourself. If there's someone out there who doesn't like you, tough.

Int: Did something happen that led to this change?

Mary: I was so glad I changed! [By now, she is just beaming - a broad smile on her face.] I changed at the end of 7th grade.

Int: Why? Did something particular happen?

Mary: Yeah. I was one of the kids that kids didn't like much. No matter how nice you were, people just didn't like you. They just didn't like me. Because I wasn't good in sports. That's one thing about kids, if you're bad in gym, they automatically don't like you. If you're bad in gym, they all yell at you. They make you unwanted. It isn't fair. I forgot to mention - in gym class, gym is the most, what, it's the most degrading class. If you're bad in gym, everyone hates you, no matter what. In gym, the kids who aren't that good in academics, they get to show off. So, if you're not good, they make fun of you, they torture you, they make other people not want you on their teams. So it's real awful. And if it gets to be that way in gym, then it's that way in the classroom. Nobody wants you in their group.

Int: So, by the end of 7th grade, everybody knew you weren't good in gym, so they didn't like you.

Mary: They thought I was a big dummy.

Int: Now, what happened at the end of 7th grade?

Mary: I thank it all to the German measles. I had three days of German measles, and I got back to school. It was spring. I was playing, my hair was in a pony tail - never before - and I just felt so carefree, so natural. I just didn't care any more. It was wonderful.

Int: What happened during those three days? You just stayed home and thought?

Mary: Yeah. I just stayed home. Actually, I listened to music a lot. I really love music.

Int: What kind of music?

Mary: I listened to Whitney Houston's song, "The Greatest Love of All." And I just listened to those words. And they were so inspirational. I felt like they were for me. I'd just listen to them and it really made me think.

Int: And what did she say to you?

Mary: "No matter what they do, they can't take away my dignity." So that really got to me. If people don't like it, too bad. This is who I am.

Int: And that stayed with you.

Mary: Forever. Whenever I hear that song, I say, "Thank you."

Int: Did that new attitude work to your advantage then, with your friendships in 8th grade?

Mary: No. Not really. It kind of counterattacked. I wasn't fashion conscious at all. All I did was just study, study. If I didn't have time to comb my hair, I just left it like that, because I didn't want to be late to school. I'd say school is more important to me. So, it was just all over the place. People would say, "Comb your hair!" And I'd say, "I don't care." So that counterattacked.

Int: How? Who?

Mary: Me. People were always talking about my hair - that I never combed it. I think I was kind of rebelling. Rebelling against them, I guess. They accepted me because I was good in school, and they wanted my help, but socially, no. They would look at my hair sometimes, but they wouldn't say anything. One time they did try. One of them came up to me and said, "Mary, I'm not trying to be mean or anything, but maybe you should comb your hair."

Int: What did you think?

Mary: I was kind of surprised, because I didn't think they ever noticed it, because they were so nice.

Int: Then this change made you more comfortable with yourself.

Mary: It made me more comfortable. It really, really, really changed me so much! More than I can say. Like it totally...a revolution in me.

Int: Is that revolution...? Up to that point, you cared a lot more about what others thought of you. Is that the difference?

Mary: Yeah. And now, I just can't stand to wear anything fashionable. I just want to be as plain and simple as possible.

Int: Do you find that there are people who appreciate that in you?

Mary: Not at all. No.

Int: Maybe you should say not yet.

Mary: Not yet. Especially my parents. My mom. She wants me to be like all the other girls - wear lipstick, wear make-up...

Int: Is that right? Most of the mothers you hear about are telling their daughters, don't wear lipstick, don't wear make-up...

Mary: I know. I told her, "You should be happy, you should be lucky..." But, sometimes I think she wants me to be more nice looking than...I think she sometimes wants a fashion conscious daughter than a school conscious daughter. And to me, the school conscious is much, much more important.

Int: Then, you don't feel like your mom quite accepts you?

Mary: No.

Int: Do you ever talk to her about it?

Mary: She always bugs me about it. She says it makes her sad. She sees other little girls out there doing that. But the thing is that if I started doing that, then I would be sad and she'd be happy. I mean, I don't want her to be sad. But I just can't do it. I've gotten so used to it.

Int: So you found yourself.

Mary: Yeah! Exactly! I found myself! [she tosses her head back and laughs.]

Int: And it wasn't so bad.

Mary: No. It was wonderful. No wonder people want to find themselves. You know, I read books, they start, "My mom left because she wanted to find herself..."

Int: Now you understand what the phrase means.

Mary: Oh, yeah!

In general, then, most students reject the notion that the seating patterns were racially grounded, although it is clear that when students say that they simply sit with their friends, they have not thought about the reason that their friends are usually of the same color. They are aware, however, that there is some security in sitting with people like themselves, whatever that may mean. From these excerpts, it seems that while the lunchroom tables are almost exclusively populated by groups of one color, it is not, for the most part, a matter of exclusion and discrimination on the basis of race, but rather a matter of social _in_clusion.

Overall, the excerpts in this chapter have been placed into three broad thematic categories which were called the question, the concept, and interactions. Within each of those sections, and emerging as a total picture, student comments have furnished evidence that many of those young people perceive or are aware of racial prejudice in their junior high schools. Some of them, Rudolfo for instance, evince remarkable insight into the nature of prejudice itself. Others, such as Holly, report on specific incidents which appear to be fairly blatant expressions of racial discrimination. Sharon, Toni, Arden, and Iris give support to the idea that much of what is present in schools is very tenuous, elusive, and ethereal, that is, attitudinal. Still others, unable to cite specific incidents, appear to be convinced that racial prejudice does exist in their schools. A few apparently do not see racial prejudice as an important problem at all. Many are able to shed light on interactions among students, and others, Mary for instance, provides eloquent insight into the individual lives of teenagers and their social functioning. Connecting these comments to each other and understanding them in light of what the literature says is one of the major goals of Chapter V.

Chapter V: Conclusions

Introduction

One of the most striking features to emerge from this study are the apparently contradictory findings which indicate that on the one hand, 78% of the students reported the absence of racial prejudice in their junior high school teachers. On the other hand, the large majority of the same students refer to belief in the presence of racial prejudice in their teachers. How can students both believe their teachers to be prejudiced and not prejudiced? One initial question that must be addressed right away, then, is the extent to which the expression of this paradox invalidates the reports. That is, does the fact that students simultaneously report opposite sides of a seemingly mutually exclusive issue nullify all their reports? How can we know what to believe?

And if we can derive an answer to that question, another level of analysis may become a problem, too, and that is, if we do determine that the student reports that they do see prejudice are to be believed, does it therefore follow that the teachers actually are prejudiced? There was, after all, no "objective" researcher following these students around in an attempt to corroborate their reports. That is, we have to determine the extent to which these perceptions reflect reality outside of the students. One way to resolve this difficulty is simply to dismiss the question as irrelevant, arguing in essence that this is research into student perceptions, and not directly into student-teacher interactions. In fact, there is merit in doing this. On one level, that is precisely what this study is.

The question is not irrelevant, however, for at least two good reasons. First, student perceptions of teacher prejudice, or of anything else, for that matter, are _all_ that may count, in that a person's reality is the only relevant one in his or her life. What people believe is itself central to the way their lives go, even if this is at variance with what others, even _all_ others, believe. So that far from being irrelevant, examination of student beliefs may be the only thing that _is_ relevant. Second, it is improbable that student beliefs are totally baseless. This is so, first, because most of everyone's beliefs have some connection to some mutually agreed upon version of reality, and second, what the students have reported on here has been verified under similar circumstances by other researchers. Therefore, I will first attempt to resolve the first paradox, the seeming contradiction within and among the student reports as to the presence or absence of racial prejudice in their teachers. I will then attempt to validate these reports by relating them to what the literature says about schools, culture, and student-teacher interactions.

Before I begin my explanation, however, it must be made clear that I am viewing this from a specific perspective. Through observation, as well as from awareness of research, much of which is cited in Chapter 2, I am convinced that a large number of white people, including teachers, harbor negative feelings about black students - prejudices - and these prejudices are evinced in schools in the form of individual interactions as well as in larger arenas such as curriculum decision making and generalized school policy. Below, I will attempt to describe this large set of interacting factors, but for now I will simply argue that those reports that attest to the presence of prejudice should be accepted as valid and that reports of its absence must be accounted for in some other way.

I believe what is happening in these interviews is that a number of factors are coming together to interfere with the reporting of "the truth" and leading to false negatives. Some factors are related to the interview per se, and some relate to the students, themselves. With reference to the interviews, I would suggest that one factor which may be at work is what might be called the "white stranger" factor. Students are faced with the prospect of discussing some very personal matters with a totally strange, white adult, in a closed room. Some students are understandably reluctant to talk to strangers under such circumstances, even adults who have tried to establish trust and believability.

It can further be maintained that black students might be especially reticent about discussing such sensitive issues as race openly and honestly with a white man. This may underlie Sharon's hesitancy to be interviewed. It may get played out in underreporting of accusations and accounts of racism and prejudice, and I believe this does explain many of the initial negative responses as to the question of the presence of prejudice. Perhaps future research can attempt to overcome this bias. I suggest, however, that while some interview effects are undeniably present, they were largely overcome in the course of the interviews. Indeed, in many cases, for example Iris, Larry, Catron, Frank, Kevin, and even Sharon, some rapport was apparently built up during the interviews, and defenses were lowered, and students who initially claimed there was no prejudice went on to acknowledge it, albeit inadvertently in some cases.

In fact, when all the transcripts were examined it was revealed that when students reported both the presence and absence of prejudice, in every case but one, the report of the absence of prejudice comes first. It is not until the students have talked at some length that another picture emerges, a picture that I tend to believe is a closer representation of their true beliefs as well as of the reality of the schools.

A second explanation for the phenomenon of contrary reports from some of the students comes from the inherent difficulties that young adolescents have in coming to terms with defects in the character of their authority figures (Adelson, 1986; Zingler & Finn-Stevenson, 1987). It may be that youngsters simply do not want to believe that the important adults in their lives, particularly those held in some measure of esteem as authorities, are racially prejudiced. This is a notion that may be difficult for the students to accept. They know that racial prejudice is a very bad thing, even as they struggle to identify and define it. Therefore, they may not be psychologically constituted to acknowledge flaws in the people that they look up to.

Developmental theory may furnish another way to understand these apparent contradictions. Racial prejudice, particularly as it is defined and described in this study, is a large, complex, amorphous, elusive, subtle entity. As such, it is all but beyond the still predominantly concrete operational mind of the young teenager. And while most of the children at this age are no doubt somewhere in the transition period out of the concrete operational stage, they are by no means fully functional in the formal stage, and are not altogether competent to deal with abstract concepts. The student, if he or she is to recognize racial prejudice will not perceive it as a large socio-political construct, since the political thought processes of a 13 or 14 year old are quite limited. Rather, the still predominantly egocentric youngster will likely recognize prejudice only if it is in a simplified, personalized form (Adelson, 1986; Haviland & Scarborough, 1981; Santrock, 1981). This helps understand why Iris, for example, contends more than once that there was no prejudice in her school because no one ever said, "You nigger," or "You spick," and why several students claimed that while they are convinced that prejudice is present in their schools, "it never happened to me."

The framework

The initial question asked in this study was to what extent are students aware of racial prejudice in their teachers? As the literature on teacher expectations from chapter 2 indicates, ample evidence exists that teachers do not treat all students the same, and part of this discrimination is based on race and cultural style rather than on any more legitimate bases such as past performance. The data from the interviews appear to indicate that many students are aware of this discrimination. However, much of the evidence of this awareness is obscure and imbedded in the conversation of these students. Closer interpretation and examination of these interviews can tease out some of the subtleties, which will strengthen the case being made here. Before beginning such an analysis of these interviews, I would like to synthesize the research cited in Chapter 2 into a model which will describe my general beliefs about the way schools work. It will describe how the research domains described in the review of the literature are relevant to the research questions proposed here, and show how they connect to an arena they have in common - schools. It attempts to take into account and describe the way numerous forces interact, and should, for the sake of this discussion, function as a general theoretical framework into which the interactions described by the students may be fit. To manage a number of related concepts, I have drawn a schematic diagram which visually connects a number of pieces in this complex set of interactions (Figure 1).

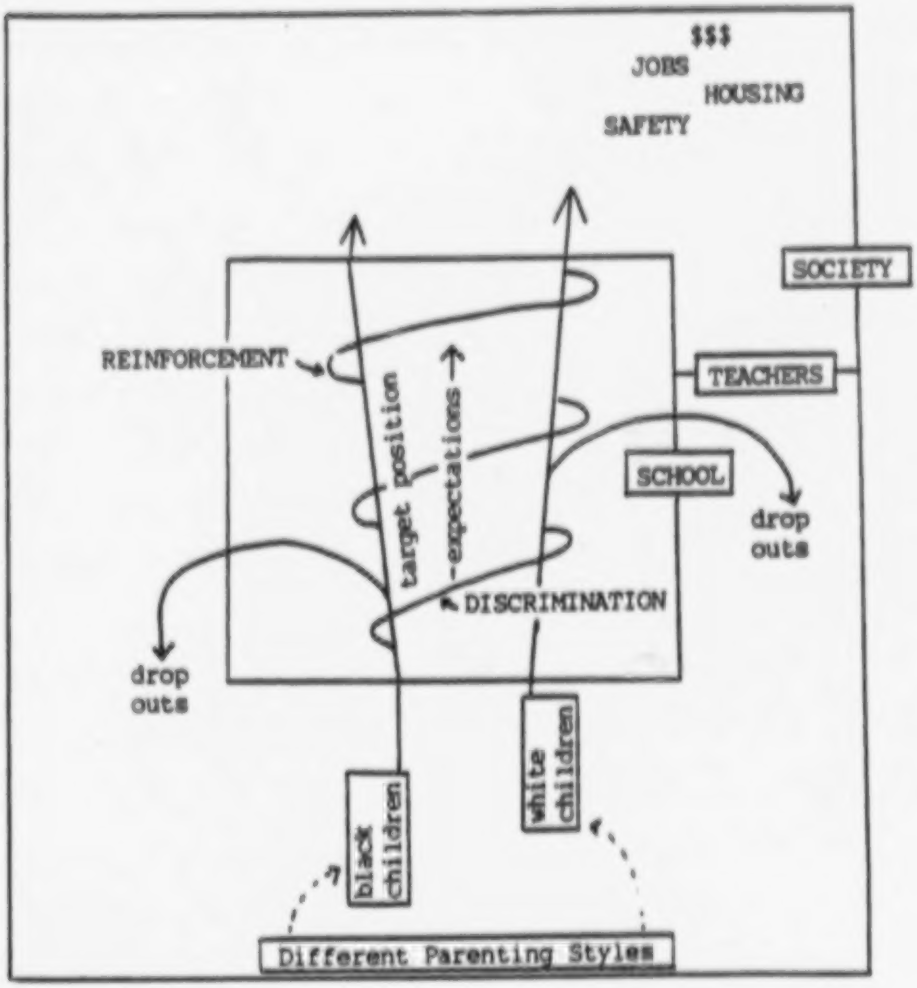
$$$
JOBS
HOUSING
SAFETY
SOCIETY
TEACHERS
SCHOOL
REINFORCEMENT
target position
-expectations
DISCRIMINATION
drop outs
drop outs
black children
white children
Different Parenting Styles

Figure 1.

Interactions of factors which are connected to racial interactions and effects in schools

Surrounding the internal features of the diagram is a rectangle which represents society. This is the entity which influences all manner of interactions which occur at all levels of society. This will be shown to be a reciprocal arrangement, of course. While we are influenced by society, we are society. Society's norms are determined by the cumulative acts of individuals, and at the same time determine the acts of individuals. In regard to racial matters, it seems as if three basic points underlie many of the important forces at work in society.

The first point, and I believe most powerful and fundamental to our understanding of the entire situation, is that whites and blacks constitute two separate ethnic groups in America. These are two distinct cultures which, while sharing many common values, experience a profound and significant clash around many others. This dissonance derives from the widespread absence of what is usually called cultural relativism. These two groups could peacefully coexist. We do not have, however, a widely accepted tolerance for values differences in other cultures, and instead have developed a powerfully judgemental system in which different is tantamount to wrong. The work of Kochman and other sociolinguists and cultural anthropologists establish this view empirically, if we need such support. In my view, it is this rub that underlies much racial discrimination and prejudice and which connects two of the research domains that underpin this study. While Allport (1954) and others contend that these antipathies - prejudices - are unfounded, I would suggest that they are, indeed, based on firm, but culture bound, grounds. For example, as Kochman reported (1981), one commonly held assertion of white women is that black men are to be loathed because of their sexual aggressiveness. And white men are to be respected for being appropriate and reserved in such matters. Kochman suggests that from a black cultural perspective, the black communicative behavior which is interpreted as sexually aggressive may alternatively be viewed as being frank, forthright, and honest, where the white behavior can be seen as deceptive and sneaky. Likewise, Perry Gilmore discovered in one school in which children were grouped academically according to good or bad attitude, that what was seen as "bad" attitude was, on examination, comprised of language and style which were associated with black culture and socioeconomic class. Attitude was considered to be "good" if it conveyed alignment with prevailing white middle class values (Gilmore, 1987). Different cultures judge behavior differently, and it is through understanding the meanings of behaviors nonjudgementally, and relative to the culture from which it emanates that members of one culture may learn to peacefully coexist with members of a culture with different values. This is not the case in America, in general. The feeling that what "they" do, and the way "they" do it is basically wrong, according to the way "we" were raised, underlies much racial prejudice and leads to racial discrimination. (And it is the multiplicity of meaning of behavior which provides much rationale for using ethnographic techniques in research such as this [Wilson, 1977].)

Two other points appear to be related to the first. One, white culture tends to be more competitive and "agency oriented" (Macdonald and Macdonald, 1988). The other is that black culture tends to be more cooperative and communal (Kagan & Madsen, 1970). The interaction of these tendencies with the relatively common intolerance evinced by many helps understand the perpetuation of the status quo in terms of power, socioeconomic status and access to opportunity. White people with greatest access to authority and power, being disposed to keep such status, and feeling that blacks are less worthy aspirants to those positions, do not readily relinquish their control of the valves to access, nor do they readily allow many blacks through the gates they keep. Despite many formal, governmentally sanctioned adjustments in society, equality of opportunity has, if statistics are to be believed, not been translated into equality of participation. As whites control much of this participation, Figure 1 shows jobs, housing, money, and security off to one side, indicating the disparity in access.

John Ogbu (1983) has suggested that the long term effects of differential access to full scale participation in society between blacks and whites has resulted in differently adaptive forms of child raising between black and white parents. Those parents, usually white, who have been encouraged to use school as a step to higher social or economic status and full opportunity of participation have prepared their children to be academically competitive and educationally prepared and motivated. Blacks, discouraged by years of deprivation and with awareness of the continuing limits placed upon them, tend to raise and send to school academically unmotivated, dependent, manipulative children. That many minority youth feel alienated from school and "contest its ideological messages" is well documented (Everhart, 1983; Kantor and Lowe, 1987; Willis, 1977). In fact, white children are usually more "ready" for school according to many of the standard readiness measures used to evaluate preschoolers. In my diagram, I show black children entering school at a greater distance from school than white children to indicate the differences that exist in the children before they even enter school. At the top of Figure 1, I show students emerging from the system wider apart than when they went in. This is to illustrate a greater difference in self-image and aspirations, as well as differences in achievement and opportunities. This disparity is present, as I suggest, even when the students enter school, but to a much lesser degree. Some of those who emerge with the most access to successful positions are then in a position to use that opportunity to exclude those they have learned from childhood during their school years to disrespect and consider less than capable, and continue the cycle of inequality. Here we can connect social class theory with the other research threads mentioned so far.

In this diagram, teachers are shown as part of the school system, but are also shown as connected to, and therefore part of, society. This is to indicate that teachers, no less than any other members of society, are likely to come to their jobs with prejudices and antipathies toward others. They then have to deal with students who evince differences in preparedness, achievement, motivation and apparent ability. This only serves to reinforce their prejudices, which are in turn shown in discriminatory behavior. It is at this point that a reciprocal, internal combustion, self-perpetuating engine is energized which continues, exacerbates and feeds on these differences. Some speculation will no doubt continue as to which is the cause and which is the effect, but the resulting situation is one in which from the very first contact with schools, children are subject to an ever escalating and widening circle of interactions between performance and expectations. I use the term "target position" to describe the position black children frequently find themselves in school. They are more frequently the subject of reprimand, correction, and adjustment (to the white middle class standard of most schools). This is not lost on them, nor on the white students. Further, I believe what happens in this interaction is that instead of treating them as individuals, when a black child is in the target position, teachers generalize their comments, and treat the student as a member of a group. This seems to be an expression of racial prejudice. For instance, in the interviews, Toni reported that teacher comments such as "you kids...", "you all..." began certain reprimands. This may help explain why when a black student is reprimanded, s/he sometimes asks, "why are you picking on us?" The "we" mode is evident in several comments from these interviews. I believe this revealing terminology derives partly from a long-established sense of community, but partly as a response to such teacher communication. This is where the central piece about teacher expectation and treatment is woven in to the larger social and school fabric, as the cycle of low performance - alienation - low expectations begins to take hold. That this discrimination is based in part on the race and culturally determined behaviors of the students is well supported by research. As the literature shows, while some of this treatment is more or less formalized and overt, e.g. tracking and "ability" grouping, most is more subtle and covert. Hence, in the diagram, a widening disparity of black children's and white children's paths through school, surrounded by the upward spiral of the continuing interaction of discrimination and reinforcement.

Additionally, it is documented (for example, Felice, 1981) that black school dropout rates are higher than those of whites. The statistics are also as definitive on the likelihood of young uneducated school dropouts having children of their own. Therefore, in Figure 1, there are lines representing the turn from student to parent which are closer to the bottom of the diagram for blacks than they are for whites, as blacks are more likely to repeat this cycle at a younger age, with their own children.

This diagram, then, is an attempt to illustrate the interplay of a number of factors and conditions which are somehow connected to the issue of racial interactions in schools. I think it is unlikely one can begin to understand the interactions between students and teachers without placing them in this fuller context.

One additional point needs to be made. The entire framework described here is built upon premises of white superiority in socioeconomic conditions, and upon white-toward-black racial prejudice. In general, this is the way things are. Whites are a numerical and political majority that does "enjoy" a superior status in American society, and are more frequently in a position to exercise racial discrimination. There are, however, plenty of examples in which the shoe is on the other foot, and racial prejudice, especially as it derives from the cultural values clashes I have described here, cuts both ways. This study includes some instances in which this occurs. However, it must be noted that the conceptualization I propose works the way it does by virtue of the existing power structure.

Interpretations

If we assume this theory to be valid, the research question asks in effect, to what extent are students able to furnish evidence of its existence? What do they see? And, in particular, how can we interpret their reports and locate them in reference to this conceptualization? In this section, I will point out a few instances in which there exist strong correspondences between the comments of the students and the findings of research referred to in Chapter 2. These correspondences are not definitive nor do I contend that they are conclusive. They are, however, compelling, and they do furnish validation for the model described above.

First, as suggested in the review of the literature in Chapter 2, whites may appear to be indifferent to discriminatory behaviors in teachers, and blacks may appear acutely sensitive to them. Yet, this discrimination is extremely subtle in most cases. Whites may be insensitive to it because they are not the targets of it, and stand to benefit passively from not being in the "target position." Larry's comments may characterize such a white perspective. He says that one of the reasons that he does not remember seeing unfair treatment was, "Hey, it's not me! At the time it just is not important." While I do not intend to imply that Larry's attitude is typical of all white people, it does exemplify a position that I believe is more widespread. Blacks may be sensitive to it because of a continual and historical need to be. As Sarah said, "...if you are black, then you feel like somebody is going to put you down." This attitude is not mindless paranoia, but a natural outgrowth of being in the target position both in and out of school. For instance, at one point in the interview with Toni and Arden, they gave a frightening description of an experience they each recently had in movie theaters. They had each seen the movie, "Mississippi Burning," a retelling of the murders of three civil rights workers in the 1960's.

Arden: Yeah, and especially, "Mississippi Burning," that movie...

Toni: Yeah.

Arden: That one, that one really got me mad. There was a lot of white people in [the theater] and then, me and my other friends were the only black people in there, and it was like they enjoyed seeing people, slavery and stuff.

Int: Oh, they were reacting that way in the movie, to the bad treatment of the black people?

Arden: Yeah

Int: Did you (T) see that too?

Toni: Yeah, I saw that too when I went.

Int: Really?

Toni: Yeah, and my mom got real upset, we almost left. Cause I went with her, cause she had seen it and she told me that there were a lot of people that were acting, you know, they were laughing, and stuff like that, and she got real upset, but she said she wanted me to see it, so I went with her again, and the same thing happened, and she got real upset, because they were laughing and, all that stuff about the Ku Klux Klan, you could hear little smart remarks, stuff like that.

Arden: Yeah.

Int: That's fairly amazing to me. When they show the Ku Klux Klan, people would, you would hear...?

Toni: Like people laughing, and stuff, yeah, they, I don't know, I can't remember exactly what they said, but, they say little smart stuff, "Yeah, that's what we need up here," or something like that, some...ignorant.

Arden: The black people getting beat, it's like so funny to them.

Toni: Yeah.

It is clear in this excerpt that to be black in America is still to suffer injustice and insult. Such treatment has powerful consequences.

At the same time, Sharon's comments attest to the notion that whatever prejudices teachers hold, they convey them in very subtle fashion, and probably not consciously. She gives examples that teachers show prejudice by their "smart remarks," and by their "smart comments," and later when she refers to a sarcastic comment of some teacher, "Well, you're going to be here next year," meaning, apparently, that the student in question will fail the year's work. Simpson's (1983) work on non-verbal criticism is evoked by such comments. A striking example of a match between a student's comments and reports of researchers appears as Toni's observations corroborate a study done by Emihovich (1982). Toni is describing how teachers used different approaches to students who needed help with their work. She says, "...the teacher would put forth more effort to help the white child. I mean, even, I mean if the black child didn't show as much enthusiasm about getting help, she'd still, I mean, she'd go over it, but she'd do a real rush job, "Well, this what you should have done," and that's it, but towards a white child she'd be more specific and show him how he could better his mistakes and wouldn't make the same ones twice" (emphasis mine). Emihovich says, "...the teacher appeared to perceive the boys differently, behaved differently toward them, and tended to direct more positive actions for behavior improvement toward the white boy" (emphasis mine).

Again, such different treatment frequently defies definition, particularly to these young people. Without being able to provide specific examples, two children, one white, one black, make similar comments: Holly says, "he was meaner to the black kids," and Arden says, "they favor the white kids." It is these comments, often interpreted as unfounded accusations, that may frequently be ignored, particularly by those teachers who may be the subjects of such contentions. I suggest they are simplistic expressions of observations of racial discrimination.

Additional evidence that the underlying cultural differences are some of the most potent fuel sources of this complex system of interactions may be seen in Kevin's discussion of the style of play and communication which occurs between Mr. D________ and his students. Kevin and Mr. D________, who are both black, apparently have the "freedom" to engage in certain types of play and joking, which white students apparently have no access to. As Kevin says, "...I guess because his way he gets along with several kids that, you know, like to make jokes about everything. And they would talk about each other in a funny way. Call each others' names. Teachers, playing with each other. Then, they would, after class, they would probably play, but, um, I guess they figure he wouldn't, he didn't, he didn't talk or play with any of the white kids. I guess they figured he was prejudiced in that way." Then, Kevin says, "But, ah, it seemed like, in a way, it seemed like he was prejudiced. Like, if a white kid was to, uh, to say anything, he'd tell him to be quiet, but if a black kid would say anything, it wouldn't be that sudden, he wouldn't tell him to be quiet. He would mess with him, call him a name or something, you know, play with him, and then tell him to be quiet." It seems that the style of communication which occurred between Mr. D________ and the black students was qualitatively different from that which occurred between him and the white students. That particular style of play, which is apparently a black cultural feature, is evidently built into the type of communication that occurs between people in that culture, and which is reflected in not only outside-of-class interactions, but also in the type of reprimand issued for what are evidently comparable offenses. Kevin appears to be saying that a white student might understandably feel left out of the play, and might justifiably claim that his teacher was prejudiced. Mr. D________ may or may not harbor negative feelings for students of another race, but Kevin has definitely noticed a different mode of communication between his teacher and students of a different race, a difference that he is apparently somewhat uncomfortable with. This is racially discriminatory behavior.

Perhaps one of the most revealing bits of conversation came during the interview with Sharon. Her comments exemplify with chilling accuracy the part of the equation which says that in interactions between black and white people, different cultural aspects are frequently taken as wrong or bad. She says, "...the little things you do, most of the teachers, white, they don't like it. Just the little things you do, they don't like it. You have your different ways, than other kids." I see this as tantamount to her saying that white teachers do not like black kids. As I have said, the differences between cultures, and particularly the pejorative judgement of black cultural style on the part of whites underlies much white behavior, and it appears to not be lost on these students.

In some interesting commentary on what turns out to be teachers' questioning technique, we find some evidence that what outside researchers have reported about different treatment of black and white students _is_ noticed from the inside. Much of the research on teacher expectations (Brophy & Good, 1986) has focused on teacher wait time, the amount of time a teacher waits before moving on, helping, or somehow intervening in the silence following the asking of a question. Several studies show shorter wait time for low achieving and minority students. A striking description of this phenomenon occurs in this excerpt, also from Sharon, detailing not only a short wait time for a black student to answer, but also a turning to, apparently, a white student for the answer - "a Jen-i-fer".

> "They ask me a question, and, like, 'Wait a minute, repeat that.' Ok, and ask again, like, 'What are you trying to say?', and then, it'd be like a cut-off real quick and ask someone else. See, that would be like, 'Why is she always doing that, man, she's prejudiced'...Because if, like, you don't understand something, the teacher should be willing ...I mean, if you don't understand, ...teacher should be willing to help you. Ours was just like, 'Well, forget her, she don't know what she doing. Let me cut and go to a Jen-i-fer, or a, you know, someone like that."

In Good's terms, teachers are likely to treat low expectancy students with "less enthusiasm." In general, these teachers appear "to make only half-hearted attempts to teach the student and to be relatively unconcerned when the student fails" (1981, p. 98). I believe it is just this attitude that Sharon is responding to. If Sharon was correct in her assumption about the teacher's thought processes, then this teacher did seem relatively unconcerned with her failure. Whether that teacher actually thought those thoughts at that moment is irrelevant, however. What is significant is Sharon's belief that the teacher might have been thinking that way. Again, I submit that Sharon's feelings are based on a sensitive reading of this and other teachers over the course of her school life.

The interviews contain many other instances in which students make reference, often unwittingly and oblique, to some aspect of this overall scheme. One comment that resonated in me for quite a while, that I repeat here was one made by Catron, at the very end of the interview where I had asked her to define prejudice, and to comment on its importance.

Catron: I see racism here, but not as much as there used to be, I don't think. So I don't think I'd be able to notice it if I saw it. I could, if there was some big thing, but it's so fine that there's not, I don't, I mean I do but I don't. But then again, I'm on the other side of it because I guess if I was black and there was racism against me, then I guess

I'd say there was. So, from my viewpoint I can't see it, but I'm sure there is. I'm sure it's there.

Int: Do you think you benefit from it?

Catron: Oh, yeah, I'm sure it's there. I know it's there, but I don't think I could really point it out to you.

Int: It's very subtle.

Catron: To me. But, that's just because I, myself, am not prejudiced in any way at all. I guess, it's hard for me to see that, because I don't believe in that.

Int: Do you think you benefit from it, if there is prejudice against blacks, let's say, do you think white people benefit from it?

Catron: No. I mean, they get more power, but I don't think that's right at all.

Int: You think they do get more power.

Catron: Yeah. They had more than blacks, but I don't think that was right.

Int: You think society is making any progress about prejudice?

Catron: Yeah, they have, in the past, with Martin Luther King, or whatever. I think they've done pretty good.

Int: Do you see it as a problem in society?
Catron: I'd rather tackle one of the other problems. There's a lot of problems. Abortion. Freedom is a big thing, but I don't think it's a problem, as serious a problem as it was before. I think it's a problem, but I don't think it's as big as it was before.

I think that this comment illustrates several aspects of the interactive model discussed above. She insightfully refers to prejudice as "fine" - subtle - and she shows understanding of the difference in perception that occurs when one is or is not the subject of discriminatory behavior. She also seems to know that white people somehow have more power as a result of the exercise of prejudice. And at the end, possibly because prejudice no longer takes on the form of name calling or lynching and is therefore not a very concrete entity in her still somewhat preformal thinking, she dismisses its importance. To be sure, racism is not as overt nor as widespread officially as it was, and she has learned her history well. However, as the literature shows, there is a large class of people in America who are not as free as others to participate in the riches of society. This fact is apparently lost on many, including Catron. To those who are not free, freedom is, indeed a big thing. Her well-meaning, and from some standpoints, enlightened, point of view betrays her indifference to one of the critical components in the large puzzle of race relations.

The interactions between the students and the school are fraught with the residue of a complex set of values and forces in which race plays a large part. Interestingly enough, within the schools, in the world of the students, there appeared to be significant progress in this area. In the section of Chapter 4 in which students speak about their own interactions in school, evidence is furnished that a more sincere type of interaction is occurring between black and white students. By and large, the comments furnished there illustrate the following story line: students get along well in junior high school; by itself, race is not a significant factor in the establishment or maintenance of friendships; while the entire population of the schools usually divides into smaller groups of friends, the groups are usually racially integrated, and there are very few students who are members of exclusively black or white friendship groups; the friendship groups are built around common interests, frequently sports and athletics. At lunch, despite the fact that tables are usually populated by all-black or all-white groups, people sit with others with whom they share common cultural features, such as eating or speaking style, history, or home neighborhood, and racial prejudice is not the basis of the seating patterns. Often, students who sit together at lunch tables are old friends. Social status can also determine the seating patterns.

The apparently tolerant and understanding attitudes of many of these students, and their seemingly sincere friendships evokes a cautious but intense optimism. It may be that when people like these students eventually come to occupy positions of any power, they will be less likely to reject someone of a different culture, if they have had the experience of having someone like that as a friend.

Throughout the analysis of the data, attention was paid to a number of variables which were thought to potentially hold significance in this study. Race, gender, and academic achievement level of the students interviewed, race of teacher, and school attended were expected to correlate with differences in events reported by the students. However, no significant effects were found with reference to school attended, level of school achievement, political history of parents, race, or gender. An equal representation of all groups reported the perception of racial prejudice in their junior high schools. The most tantalizing hints of the significance of any of the variables comes when examining the definitions of prejudice of the students, and when examining the reports of incidents of racial discrimination. The differences between boys' reports and girls' reports are not at all large nor clear cut enough to be considered to be significant, but are interesting none the less. A general trend which may be present is the inclination of girls to describe mostly subtle and intangible features of the phenomena they are discussing while boys tend to use more definite and specific terminology and refer to more concrete items. Additionally, it was black girls who furnished the richest descriptions of specific student to teacher interactions. Whether this tendency would be apparent with another group of interviewees is intriguing. The question also occurs as to whether this difference reflects a difference in the way boys and girls perceive things, or only in the way they describe them. This may be a productive area for future research.

Implications

As teachers are fond of saying, "What can we learn from this?" Here, the this is the picture painted by these 18 students. The picture is exceptionally complex. It is fuzzy, incomplete and unclear. It has pieces which overlap others and pieces which are seemingly unconnected. It has pieces which are not even on the page. Some parts contradict other parts. And there is little on which universal agreement occurs. The task of drawing meaningful conclusions, or even more optimistically, suggestions toward an improved future, is daunting. Nonetheless, I believe some parts of the picture emerge clearly enough that policy may even be based upon them. In the same way that an image of a Sunday afternoon in a park, and not, say, an image of a machine, can emerge from a particular series of paint dots, so can some general features be made out of these interviews when they are viewed from some distance.

First, it is fairly clear that the more children have in common, the more likely it is that they will truly accept each other. This is not news, but the idea is substantiated in the many conversations in which students discuss their friendships and the relationships they have with one another. Where gender and race are certainly unifying commonalities, in most cases, what draws children together are common interests, most commonly sports and athletics. Additionally, those features which tend to be peculiar to specific cultures, communication style, and perhaps style in general, are powerful unifying entities. In the lunch rooms, those children who grew up together sat together. Mealtime is certainly an important time of day in almost all cultures. In order to break bread daily, comfortably, in a group of peers, it is necessary that conversation style and content be familiar and easy. For children of different cultures to do this, it is necessary for them to have developed some common, shared communication features. In those cases in which black and white children sat at the same lunch tables together, the students were either involved in athletics together, or came from the same neighborhoods (which is rare). Students frequently explained the friendship groups and the lunchroom seating in terms of these factors. Simply said, the more similar the students, the more likely they will be really integrated. The critical piece here, I believe, is the implication that children who grow up in segregated neighborhoods, as most do, have the least chance of learning, sharing, accepting, and even adopting cultural styles other than their own. Massey and Denton (1989) suggest that the "extremity of black residential segregation...may help explain the growing social and economic gap between the black underclass and the rest of American society" (p. 390).

Therefore, some implications are fairly clear. First, integration appears to lead to a more meaningful appreciation of people of other cultures, by permitting cultural features to gain early respect and acceptance. Children of different cultures who spend time together can develop common interests together, and can learn early and naturally to accept each others' cultural styles as different, perhaps, but not wrong. Schools must therefore reflect, not be the first to impose, integration. Meaningful integration apparently begins at home and in the neighborhoods, years before children begin to attend schools. One place, then, to address the dual nature of our society is in housing policy. Schools will merely be body-mixing and de-segregating children until neighborhoods and communities become integrated. In many ways, then, the responsibility for improving social conditions rests with those who control housing - banks and real estate businesses.

Other school/society connections might also be examined. For instance, Rosenbaum (1989) proposes establishing a wide-ranging program of school-employer linkages and school-provided help in finding jobs, modeled on the Japanese system, which would shift the set of job opportunities, particularly for minority youth. In this type of system, such features provide greater incentives for students in school, decreasing the cycle of discouragement, poor grades, low expectations, discouragement, and so on. In such an arrangement, minorities would not have to surpass whites to get skilled jobs. They would get the jobs if they have the requisite skills. Low income and minority youth would not have to improve their relative rank in school, an unrealistic likelihood at this point, but simply acquire the necessary skills. Such a proposal is well worth close examination, particularly in communities in and around large cities with large concentrations of low income and minority youth.

Second, on another plane, the people who run schools also have a great responsibility to attempt to break these cycles of expectation and behavior. It appears clear that this is an important piece in the large picture. One place to begin this work is to look at instructional grouping practices in schools. The methods of evaluating "ability" or readiness, and the subsequent instruction may need an entirely different perspective. Perhaps the role of schools will need to be modified. If nothing else, assumptions about students and their futures will need to be closely examined. Certainly, the current practice of assigning students to ability groups, which so powerfully define these youngsters through their school lives, deserves more critical attention. Perhaps changes will have to even be made in the way we talk about children. The term, "at risk" may be damaging in and of itself, or at least the accompanying set of expectations may be. Schools may be putting too much stock in their alleged ability to predict who will and who will not be a success, and how best to prepare them for such success. In essence, then, schools need to engage in some intense self scrutiny.

With reference to interactions which occur in schools - the focus of this study - what is called for is a substantial commitment to examining what I refer to as the clash of cultural values and its residual effects. The very nature of our interactions needs to be examined. In some school districts, early efforts in in-service training of school faculties during the first years of school desegregation touched on these critical points, but the efforts were not sustained, nor were they of sufficient intensity. (Many participants in Edwinton's staff development efforts in the 1960's would contend that the efforts were, indeed, intense. In many school districts, however, such efforts were characterized by considerably less intensity. In any case, the work in all school districts ended far too soon.) Mainly, blacks and whites will need to come together and confront all the conceptions they hold about race and culture, in an attempt to carve out a more reliable common base of operations. The differences in cultures will not go away, but they do not need to be interpreted as evidence of pathology, failure, or something fundamentally bad. Students and teachers alike need to be able to view one another from a perspective that is minimally cluttered by faulty and preconceived notions of race and culture.

With this goal in mind, I will suggest three arenas in which the problems of race relations can be addressed - staff development, curricular areas, and extracurricular areas. As to staff development, little guidance is provided by research. Banks (1988) points out that in spite of extensive inquiry into that area, we know very little about how to modify teachers' values, particularly with reference to multi-cultural issues. Still, some ideas may be worthy of attention. First, teachers need a safe forum in which to discuss their views of their own and others' cultures. Small group discussions, meeting fairly regularly, with some deft leadership, might open some doors to what would initially be some difficult but crucial conversation. Such discussion groups would most surely be awkward and probably quite reluctantly attended. Arranging such meetings would be a delicate process in itself. However, they might be more likely to be successful if there has been some large-group work preceding them. Two topics that appear to be provocative as well as important for large group presentation are teacher expectations and Black English. Even though these are quite controversial, and, some might complain, overworked, the literature is quite compelling. The literature on Black English can be very convincing, even to the most traditional of English teachers, precisely because of its ability to demonstrate the legitimacy of a black grammar. Regardless of what position one ultimately takes on the teaching or accepting of the black vernacular, it can at least gain respectability through examination of some of the scholarly attempts to reveal its structure. And this leads to a secondary point. One touchy, even inflammatory subject today is that of a national language and the move toward bilingualism in America. One argument for instituting English as a national language holds that visitors to our country should be required to learn "our" language. But "our" language includes Black English. Clearly, blacks are not visitors. Perhaps, teachers can investigate the possibility that blacks and whites, students as well as teachers, should be bilingual, within those cultural frameworks.

And teachers who would vehemently deny holding any prejudices might still profit from looking at what researchers have found about classroom interactions. Sensitive leadership might allow a group of teachers to examine research findings for applicability and meaning in their own schools. The research base in this domain is extensive, and there may be much that teachers can learn by gaining familiarity with this material.

A third, less familiar area of research which is at least as important than those of teacher-student interactions or Black English, and one which connects them, is the field of socio-linguistics. It is possible that with familiarity with some of the sound findings of that field, people can make some important headway into understanding one another in new and better ways. This could pave the way for some more personal soul searching and open up an avenue for some secure and meaningful small group discussions. The large underlying question that should be addressed is the issue of differences. We need to ask, in what ways do black people and white people differ, and what are the implications of these differences for instruction and human interaction?

Because of the wide gulf of understanding and agreement which typically exists between members of diverse cultures, it would seem that one feature of such staff development programs might be seen as quite critical, namely, that of leadership. One way of raising the level of potential benefit would be to use pairs of discussion leaders, one black and one white. As contrived and prescriptive as this seems, to open doors of understanding between and among different cultures, a trustworthy and knowledgeable guide/interpreter must lead the way. One way to do this is with white discussion leaders who can demonstrate some credibility with blacks, and vice-versa. Parenthetically, relative to this, one hears of the importance of a particular black person who is in, or is being sought for, a position of some status or authority. Often, it is stated that minority youth need to see "successful role models." And while that may very well be true, what may be at least as important is that white people need to see such models. It is imperative to reduce and eliminate prejudices and stereotypes in those people who are in positions to use their prejudices to control the access that blacks, Hispanics, and other caste minorities have to full and equal participation in society. Those people are frequently white, and include teachers.

It is likely that with enough sincere attention to these issues, those involved will experience some new understanding and growth. It is also possible that many of the people involved in this process would themselves become capable discussion leaders. These people would be superior resources in a second arena, extracurricular activities. I would suggest that student discussion groups on the same topics could have a large impact on the daily lives of teachers and students. Maybe students could get together before or after school to examine the same general issues that teachers have looked at - interpersonal communication. Some of the more capable teachers might serve as discussion leaders, maybe in the same "salt and pepper" arrangement. Groups of teachers and students might even be fruitful in certain circumstances. Certainly, if teachers and students could interact in a situation in which lines of power and authority do not need to be established, for example in a discussion group in which they are more or less equals, new types of understandings can be forged. Along those same lines, schools can also facilitate improved relations between students and staff by arranging for more situations in which traditional classroom barriers, that is, the lines of authority, are absent. Such activities are those that place teachers and students in more equivalent positions vis-a-vis power. Exercises might include working jointly in volunteer activities such as serving food in a local soup kitchen, paper and trash clean-up crews in and around the school, and paint-up, fix-up projects in the school neighborhoods.

The third sphere of activity in which race relations may be addressed is school curriculum. As in the staff development and extracurricular areas, one of the main goals is to demystify the idea of race. In some places, it seems to be almost taboo to discuss it. And how ironic it is that school districts have mandated instruction on such formerly covert aspects of life as personal hygiene, abortion, drug use and alcoholism in families, spouse and child abuse, AIDS, divorce, birth control, and sex habits, to say nothing of more public behaviors as smoking, seat belt use and diet. Yet, there is virtually no curriculum which addresses race and race relations, a feature of life even in modestly integrated settings. Therefore, I suggest that virtually all curricula be reviewed with an eye toward including instruction on the role of race and race relations in any and all disciplines. This would mean reevaluating all historical references. Most deserving of scrutiny would be the study of history, itself, of course, but the study of the past in all disciplines should be examined. I am not advocating the establishment of specific Black Studies programs, such as Black History. Rather, I would suggest the inclusion in all curriculum areas attention to the contributions of people of all races, accompanied by the examination of the absences of certain people or groups, and the reasons for these absences. Frequent heed should be paid to the nature of black contributions and the reasons that such contributions have historically been held in less esteem than those of white people, and why such attitudes should still prevail in some places. It would seem that in many ways, whether acknowledged or not, the relations between the majority and minorities in this country have had much to do with the history of the country. Lack of attention to this fact has only reinforced the notion that such relations were not and are not particularly important in the large scheme of things. Critically thinking students should be asking why we know of such a relatively small number of black inventors, for example. Were there actually few? If so, why? If not, why don't we know more about them today? What is the importance of race in the reporting of history? These questions are not only for theorists and historians, but for any people in an integrated nation of well educated people.

Study of foreign languages might well examine dialect. By teaching "standard" versions of a foreign language do we imply that there is only one correct version of any language? Certainly, standards are important and are indispensable, but they are seldom if ever universal. Perhaps moving to a more conversational approach to languages would validate variety in dialects instead of inadvertently implying their corruptness. Undoubtedly, more attention to the cultures of other nations and less on the formal grammars would shift the emphasis from structure to meaning, a crucial change.

The study of English and American literature does not have to continue to be the study of writers of European ancestry. Clearly, there is a growing awareness of the legitimacy of writers of other ethnic heritage. However, in including these writers, attention should be paid to the fact that these are, indeed, recent accretions to the traditional curriculum. Again, this should be examined for its significance and its connections to race relations. The study of the English language can itself be an ideal way to examine language, dialect, cultural styles of speaking, and meanings. It appears to be an almost perfect means of opening up conversation on the ways people speak and the meanings of what they say, particularly as these might vary from culture to culture.

Even the science curriculum can help to demystify race. It might be that some time in the future, race will not be the sensitive issue that it appears to be now. Perhaps science classes can help in this endeavor. For example, inclusion of race as a variable in student-run experiments, from growing plants in first grade, to measuring human reactions to stimuli in upper grades, would place some of the characteristics of people of different races in perspective, some being significant under some circumstances, others not. Conversation and examination of such significance might be quite enlightening. In fact, the issue of race might ultimately be a fascinating topic for an entire school to study for an entire year in schools that do such yearly thematic studies. This will not be at all easy, quick or comfortable. Our society is powerfully rooted in Eurocentric traditions. In order for this orientation to change, a monumental shift will need to ensue, on the magnitude of the one which occurred in the 15th and 16th centuries in which the Earth ceased being the center of the universe. What will be required is that some basic, fundamental "truths" be examined, questioned, and revised or overturned. What must eventually emerge is the view that cultural pluralism is not the rejection of one's own values, but simply the acknowledgment of the equal validity of the values of others. As grandiose as such goals are, nothing less seems to hold much promise of truly emancipating society from its caste-like structure. And one place to begin this effort is in the one institution through which every American must pass - school.

As this dissertation is being written, democracy is taking new roots in many parts of the world. Perhaps these world shaking events will provoke a new impetus toward self-examination in our nation. The tensions around the issue of Standard English vs Black English, for instance, parallel these occurrences. As questions are being asked world-wide, "Whose country is this?", "Who shall decide our fates for us?", "With whom world-wide will we ally ourselves?", we may find ourselves asking some similar, if only slightly less crucial questions: "Whose language is this?", "Who shall determine the standards by which we are judged?", "Who should have the right to determine the answers?" These questions actually do ask, "Whose country is this?" Ultimately, such introspection will need to occur in many places and at many levels if we are to develop into a truly democratic, pluralistic society.

Further research directions

It is clear that research of this nature is intended to describe a set of phenomena rather to prove a point. As non-experimental research, it purports to be illustrative, rather than representative, though I believe it is actually both. The conclusions reached are tentative and based on a very localized situation. This particular study, with its large scale societal implications, can not stand on its own as the definitive statement on student-teacher interactions. However, I do have faith in the meaning that I have ascribed to the data collected, and believe the interpretations to be true and applicable to other similar circumstances. Therefore, I can make some suggestions and recommendations for further research which can place this study in a larger context.

First, this type of research could be done again, but with youngsters who are in the grades referred to at the time of the study. Several practical considerations led me away from such an approach, but it may be fruitful to examine such children's perceptions during the time they are actually in those grades. That is, interview 7th or 8th graders or high school freshmen, but refer to their current year in school. This research will help verify or modify the findings generated in this study. As an extension of this approach, future research might expand to other grades and other age groups, and particularly, to other locations and settings. In any case, follow-up interviews might also prove enlightening. Perhaps students could be interviewed a second or third time, which would permit time to reflect on the issues of the first interview. Return visits with the students could be quite valuable by clarifying and illuminating points that may have been missed or incompletely dealt with. Teachers might be interviewed to examine their views on the general topic, and to collect their attitudes and opinions on the reports of students. Ultimately, it may even be necessary to compare the perceptions of teachers with the perceptions of students, if such research is to be put to meaningful use. In a similar vein, while this particular type of research examines student perceptions, it only has student perceptions on which to rely. It might be fruitful and supportive to add additional viewpoints to the student reports. Perhaps future research designs can incorporate parallel observations of students while they are in classes to tie into the interviews. In this way, researchers may be able to construct richer or even more meaningful propositions as to the nature of these phenomena. I will also suggest here, that what may be of greatest significance is that because racism is such a pervasive feature of our society, that it is part of the context and all but invisible, particularly to those youngsters who have not experienced the more concrete awareness that the Civil Rights struggle brought to earlier generations. That many students do not think they see prejudice is perhaps the most distressing and revealing feature of this study. As the saying goes, perhaps we are asking the fish to discover water. We will know much more about this question, however, if we investigate the perceptions of some of these same youngsters in later years, when they are more experienced and when their thinking is more mature. Therefore, perhaps some future research could be designed around a longitudinal study, in which the changes in opinions and understandings can be tracked and examined under the lens of time and experience.

As for the data generated from this study, someone else could listen to the tapes and hear something quite different. After all, the *sine qua non* of this type of research is the personal and "subjective" nature of the data and its interpretation. As much as I tried to "bracket" or suspend my beliefs and attitudes, I may also have unconsciously "found what I was looking for," as Edmund Burke said.

As it turned out, I was surprised that more students did not report that specific teachers had a reputation for being prejudiced, or that their comments did not indicate more racially discriminatory behavior in certain teachers' classrooms. Personal experience and common sense would lead one to suppose that some teachers are more burdened by prejudice than others. Perhaps the reason such teachers did not stand out in this study reflects the small number of students interviewed from each school. I speculate that if the number of students were larger, say, in some subsequent similar study, other trends, tendencies and larger scale features of student-teacher interactions would be revealed. I was also surprised that no white students in this study were able to say that they were aware that they were the inadvertent "beneficiaries" of racial prejudice toward black students, even if uncomfortably so. Perhaps it would be asking too much of anyone, let alone a high school freshman, to do this. But, maybe a larger study would uncover such sentiments in a few students.

More research is also needed into the realm of human emotions and prejudices. Why, for instance, do we reject things unknown or different? Moffett (1989) says that the wisest use of research findings would be to help understand "what opens and closes the heart and mind in ourselves as individuals and to recognize these causes and effects when multiplied into social forces" (p. 134). And in an even more speculative realm, deeper questions are evoked. What is race? What is black? White? To what extent is behavior genetically determined, influenced, mediated? To what extent are there biological imperatives to our acts, and can we overcome them if we so choose? While these are far beyond the scope of this type of research, the questions do seem to underlie the foundation of the problem.

This research has attempted to contribute to the knowledge about the interactions between teachers and students through a neglected channel of inquiry - the students' perceptions. Whether or not it can succeed in that goal can only be known with time. If what I propose to be true about schools and society is in fact so, then it is incumbent upon those who have professed fidelity to the philosophies of the teaching profession to do whatever they can to insure that all children have the full measure of opportunity to develop and apply their skills and talents as fully functioning members of society. One can only hope that their efforts begin as soon and efficiently as possible and go forth with all deliberate speed.

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Appendix A

The city of Edwinton, a venerable old suburb just north of a large, midwestern city, is divided into three attendance areas for the three "neighborhood" junior high schools: Casey, Norton, and Hiller. A fourth junior high school,* a division of the John F. Kennedy School, a laboratory school which actually has a k-8 population, derives its population from the entire city and, as such, has no attendance area of its own. Students from all four junior high schools, which are part of a 14 school district (known in this study as District X) feed into Edwinton Township High School (ETHS), the only high school in the city. The high school district exactly overlaps the elementary district, so that everyone in the city is always in both school districts. These districts serve this city and a fraction of neighboring Stockton. The socio-economic levels of the city's population runs the spectrum from uneducated poverty level families to families of substantial wealth and status. The boundaries of the three schools have been drawn, and redrawn, so as to include comparable levels of socio-economic and racial diversity into each school population (Figure 1).

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* The schools are named Middle Schools, but in structure and function they are actually junior high schools.

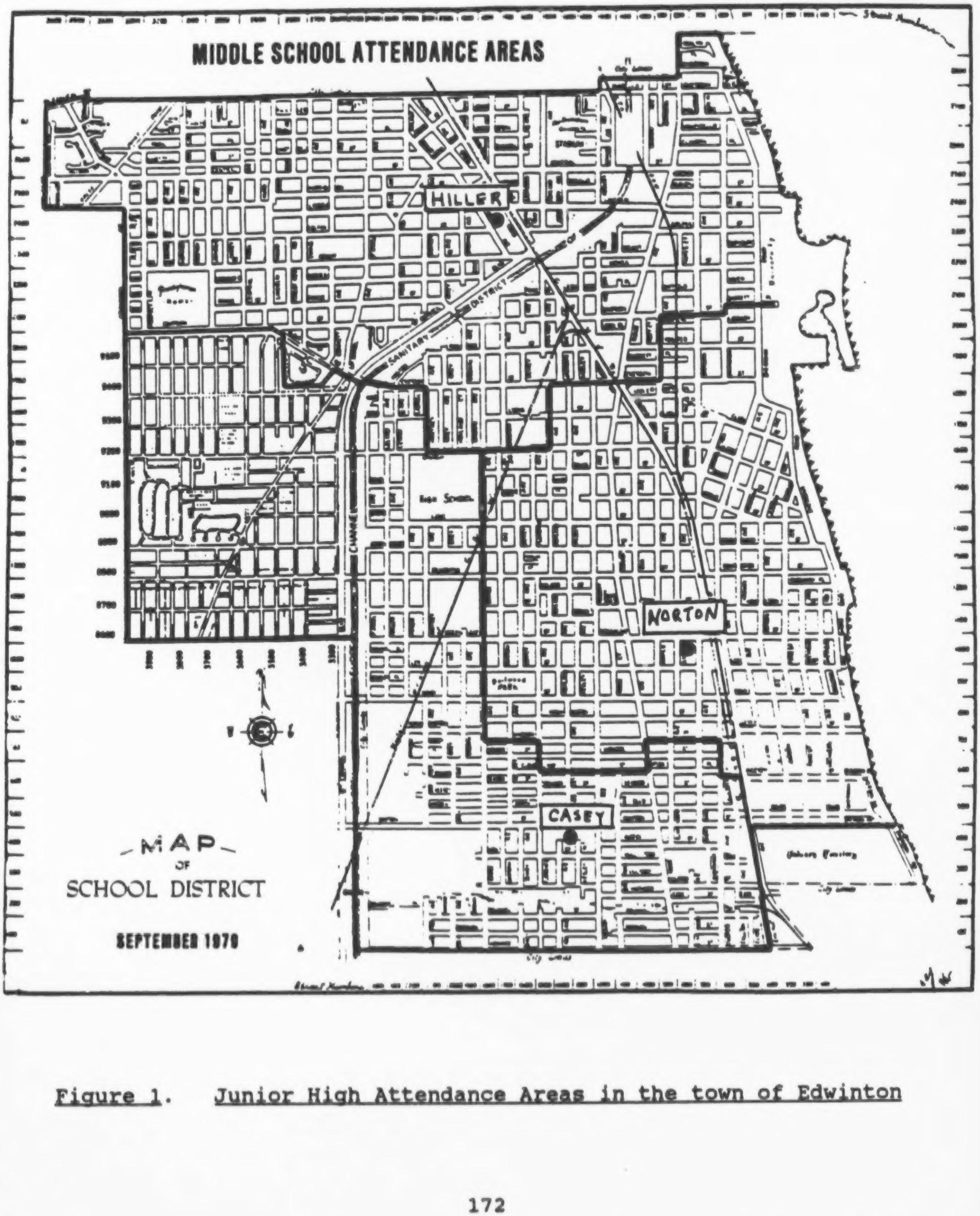
MIDDLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AREAS
HILLER
SANITARY DISTRICT
High School
NORTON
CASEY
MAP OF SCHOOL DISTRICT
SEPTEMBER 1970

Figure 1. Junior High Attendance Areas in the town of Edwinton

Community populations in certain areas of the city are not very stable, and periodic school redistricting, the last time done in 1978 and anticipated again in the early 1990's, has barely kept a fairly constant and consistent racial balance among all three schools, which the school district requires of itself (Table 1).

Table 1

	Total 6-8 Enrollment	White Enrollment	%	Black Enrollment	%	Other Enrollment	%
Casey	639	217	34	380	59	42	7
Hiller	552	330	60	203	37	19	3
Norton	534	270	51	214	40	50	9

Certain parts of neighboring Stockton are in School District X's attendance areas. To maintain racial balance in the schools, boundaries have been drawn in such a way so as to include these mostly white areas in the Casey school attendance area. Since some of these students need to travel almost three times as far to Casey as they would to their neighborhood school, Hiller, and since there is no public transportation from Stockton to Casey school, the school district provides free busing for those students. (Other students who live over 1 1/2 miles from their "neighborhood" school, but who have access to public transportation can get bus service through the school district for a fee.)

As to economic status, Table 2 indicates the percentage of students in each school that come from low income homes, as determined by requests for free and reduced-rate lunches.

Table 2

SCHOOL	% LOW INCOME STUDENTS
Casey	21.8
Hiller	14.0
Norton	24.0

The number of full time staff members in the public schools, including classroom teachers, administrators, non-certified staff, special services personnel, has remained fairly stable over the last three years. In 1985, the minority/majority ratio of all staff was 35.4% / 64.6%. In 1989, that ratio had shifted only slightly, to 37% / 63%.

Table 3 shows the net changes in school staffing in the schools in this study over the three year period 1985 - 1988

Table 3

	1985		1988	
	Minority	Majority	Minority	Majority
Casey	34.7%	65.3%	35.0%	65.0%
Hiller	40.4%	59.6%	42.0%	58.0%
Norton	29.0%	71.0%	29.0%	71.0%

Appendix B

Dear ETHS student, May 3, 1989

I am a researcher interested in education. I am studying the opinions of high school students, and their views on their 7th and 8th grade education. To get the information I need, I will be interviewing some 20 high school students. Working with the Freshman office, I have selected some students that I hope will be able to give me a good picture of middle school life. You have been selected as one of these students. I hope you can help me with this research.

If you agree to be interviewed, we would meet at ETHS in a conference room during an Advisory period. If you were to be in reading during that Advisory, we would use a study hall period instead. The questions that I will be asking you in the interview will cover a fairly wide spectrum, covering many different aspects of your 7th and 8th grade experience.

It may be important that you understand that our conversation will be strictly confidential. I will not use your name nor identify you in this study. You will simply be providing me with a part of a much bigger picture. Your comments will be strictly anonymous, but extremely important.

I think that it is possible that your parents would want to know about this study, so I am asking that you discuss it with them. If, for any reason, they have some questions, or objections to your participation in this project, please have them call me at home this evening, or sometime tomorrow. If I do not hear from them, I will assume that it is OK with them that you participate. I really appreciate your help with this. Thank you, very much.

Charles Cole
475-7993

Appendix C

Date: **Interview Guide** name:

Do you mind if I tape our conversation so that I can better concentrate on what you say? No one will hear it except me. I am going to be asking you a number of questions about your 7th and 8th grade experiences. I will start with some general questions about you and your background. Then, I'll ask you more specific questions about school, the kids and the teachers. I am interested in learning about relations between teachers and students. I want you to feel free to say anything you like. If I ask you anything that you do not care to answer, feel free to say that, too. Do you have any questions before we start?

Family, background.

Do you come from a politically active home? Do your parents usually vote in elections? What do you know about their political background? Were they ever in protest marches or anything like that? Do you ever have family discussions about politics? What are the conversations about?

7,8 grade years.

What do you call the type of school you went to - junior high, or middle school? How would you describe the school academically? Was it hard? easy? High pressure? easy going? What kind of teachers did you have?

Groups.

Were there different social groups at your school? Was everyone in some sort of group? What were some of the different groups?

Interactions.

In general, how did kids get along in your school? How did kids get along with the teachers? Did kids from different groups interact much? What kinds of things did they do together? Did kids of different races get along well? The lunchroom is a place to see all the kids together. Can you tell me how kids sat at lunch tables? Can you explain the patterns? Is it based on prejudice? What causes kids to sit at tables in the patterns they do?

Racial climate.

In the Dist. X attitude survey that you filled out every year, almost one third of the Black kids said that they were not treated fairly. How do you explain that? In that same survey, 84% of the white students said that their teachers liked them.

But in the same survey, only 77% of the black students said that their teachers liked them. Why do you think there was this difference? In a survey I gave to some students, I asked them "where do you see prejudice?" Most of them said "Everywhere - in school, downtown, etc." How do you explain that? How would you describe the racial climate of your school? Was race ever important to you or to others? When? Can you tell if a person is racially prejudiced? Did you have any contact with anyone who you thought was racially prejudiced? What was it about the person that made you think s/he was racially prejudiced? Did you know of any teachers who were prejudiced? How do you know? If a teacher were prejudiced, how would you know? Can you say which teachers did not like White kids? How do you know? Did any dislike Black kids? How do you know? What were some of the most blatant acts or statements of teachers that let you know they were prejudiced? Can you tell me some stories of racial prejudice in your school? Were any teachers definitely not prejudiced? How do you know?

Hearsay.

Have you ever heard stories of racial prejudice in your school or in another school? Do you believe them? Why?

Effects.

Did you, or anyone you know ever benefit or profit from the fact that someone was prejudiced? Did you ever witness anyone get the benefits of someone's prejudice? Did you ever see anyone suffer because of someone's racial attitudes? How have the racial attitudes of the teachers in your school affected you?

You've told me a lot of very interesting things. I really appreciate your help on this and your honesty with this. Is there anything you want to ask me? Is there anything that you did not get a chance to say that you would like to add? Is there anything that I should know?

If I wanted to get in touch with you this summer to ask you about some of the things you've said and talk a bit more, how could I get in touch with you?

Appendix D

Selected Attitude Survey Questions

9. I like being in a classroom with students of different races.

13. I get along well with people of different races.

15. Most of my teachers like me.

18. It is easy for me to get help in school.

20. I believe I am treated fairly in school.

Answers to survey questions by grade and race

7th grade (1987)

	BLACK (%)				WHITE (%)			
	Agree		Disagree		Agree		Disagree	
	strongly	somewhat	somewhat	strongly	strongly	somewhat	somewhat	strongly
9.	72.5,	22.7 /	2.4,	1.9	69.6,	19.0 /	5.1,	5.9
13.	62.1,	28.4 /	7.1,	1.9	63.2,	28.5 /	4.7,	3.6
15.	42.7,	35.1 /	10.4,	9.0	48.6,	35.6 /	8.7,	7.1
18.	46.0,	28.4 /	15.2,	10.0	34.0,	42.7 /	12.6,	10.3
20.	38.9,	29.4 /	16.6,	14.7	33.6,	42.3 /	15.4,	8.3
8th grade (1988)								
9.	72.5,	19.0 /	2.1,	3.2	73.8,	18.7 /	2.7,	4.0
13.	64.0,	25.9 /	4.2,	1.1	69.4,	24.9 /	4.4,	3.1
15.	45.0,	39.2 /	9.5,	4.8	40.4,	44.9 /	10.2,	4.0
18.	48.7,	29.6 /	16.4,	4.2	29.8,	43.1 /	16.4,	9.8
20.	34.4,	34.9 /	20.6,	7.9	38.7,	37.8 /	13.3,	10.2

Appendix E

District X Attitude Survey Results Condensed

Questions # 9, 13, 15, 18, 20

Differences in affirmative and negative responses by race (%)

7th Grade	AGREE			DISAGREE		
Q.	BLACK	WHITE	DIFFERENCE	BLACK	WHITE	DIFFERENCE
9.	95.2	88.6	6.6	4.3	11.0	6.7
13.	90.5	91.7	1.2	9.0	8.3	0.7
15.	77.8	84.2	6.4	19.4	15.8	3.6
18.	74.4	76.7	2.3	25.2	22.9	2.3
20.	68.3	75.9	7.6	31.3	23.7	7.6
8th Grade						
9.	91.5	92.5	1.0	5.3	6.7	1.4
13.	89.9	89.3	0.6	5.3	7.5	2.2
15.	84.2	85.3	1.1	14.3	14.2	0.1
18.	78.3	72.9	5.4	20.6	26.2	5.6
20.	69.3	76.5	7.2	28.5	23.5	5.0

The results of question number 18 particularly appear to become more discrepant when the components of the positive and negative responses are looked at separately:

	AGREE		DISAGREE	
	strongly	somewhat	somewhat	strongly
Black	48.7	29.6	16.4	4.2
White	29.8	43.1	16.4	9.8
Difference	18.9	13.5	0.0	5.6

Appendix F

You may answer this on notebook paper. Number your answers, or answer them in order. I am very interested in your answers. You must turn it in tomorrow at the beginning of class. You will have fifteen minutes to discuss the question with your classmates before you begin to write.

1. Do you think racial prejudice is a bad thing? Why?

2. Have you or anyone you know done anything recently to combat racial prejudice?

3. What can our school do about racial prejudice?

4. Where do you see racial prejudice?

"END OF DOCUMENT"